

LAUNCH DOCUMENTS



**DOWNTOWN
CORNERSTONE
CHURCH**

Launch Documents
Downtown Cornerstone Church

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To the best of our ability, all resources have been notated or footnoted.

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An Introductory Note

Church planting is hard. We need all the help we can get. This document is a compilation of the various resources we created, synthesized or adapted during the Launch Community development phase (June-Dec 2010) of Downtown Cornerstone Church (DCC). We formatted them for clarity and unity, but otherwise they were left untouched. Original sources are notated throughout, though admittedly there may be exceptions. Honestly, I can't remember. We never planned to compile them. It's messy...just like church planting.

We created this compilation with three groups in mind. First, for those that are new to DCC who would like to better understand where we've been. **Second**, for those that have been a part of DCC from the beginning who need a refresher. **Third**, for those that are planting a church (or involved in a church plant) and are looking for a resource on how to cultivate their initial launch community. This is not *the* way to do it, but it is how we did it. It looks polished and put together, but that's not how it felt when we were in the thick of it.

Our timeline was fairly straight forward.

MAY '10 We began with an initial prayer gathering which marked the start of our launch team recruitment and development. From there, we met every Sunday night and engaged the community on some level during the week (Happy Hours, service opportunities, city events, etc).

JUNE We took the first month (June) to discuss and debate our vision, mission and values (pp 5-22).

JULY-SEPT Then, we transitioned into a three month (July-Sept) study through the *Gospel-Centered Life* material from World Harvest Mission. This was crucial in setting a gospel-centered trajectory. We supplemented this material with tangible ways to live out our vision as a newly forming church (pp 23-26).

FALL '10 In the fall of 2010 we held four preview gatherings. The first of these was a vision night for friends, family, neighbors, coworkers or anyone who was remotely interested in joining or supporting this work. We explored our core values over the course of the next three preview gatherings. We continued to meet as a launch community on the Sunday evenings in between. I also created a study that merged elements of *Total Church*, *Tangible Kingdom* and *Gospel in Life* (pp 27-66). After the "Loving the City to Life" material (pp 67-76) we transitioned into the next season.

JAN '10 In January we went into "soft launch" mode with weekly Sunday semi-public gatherings in the AM.

APRIL '10 On April 4th we marked our birth as a newly forming church in the heart of downtown Seattle.

Cultivate your first love.

Jesus gave us Great Commandments (Mt 22:36-40) and a Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20). Amidst the great joys and tribulations of planting, if you cultivate a vibrant relationship with Jesus, grow in community and mix-it up with non-Christians you'll do well - and your people and city will be the better for it, no matter the outcome. Love God. Love people. Make disciples.

"Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen." Ephesians 3:20

For Jesus' Fame,



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The Church

What is the Church?

The church lies at the very center of the eternal purpose of God. It is not a divine afterthought. It is not an accident of history. On the contrary, the church is God's new community. For his purpose, conceived in a past eternity, being worked out in history, and to be perfected in a future eternity, is not just to save isolated individuals and so perpetuate our loneliness, but rather to build his church, that is, to call out of the world a people for his own glory. (John Stott, *The Living Church*)

- What do you think of when you hear “church”? What does Seattle think of?
- What kind of church does this city need?
- What are the simplest, irreducible attributes of the church?
- The story of God and the life of his people. (cf Acts 2:42-47)
- Great Commandment(s) and the Great Commission.

Deconstructing “church”.¹

- Go to the city, don't wait for the city to join us.
- Show the city Christianity works because it's true.
- Be in community, not just a group.
- Emerge within the culture, don't ignore it.
- Start micro, not macro.
- Emphasize multiplication not addition.
- Raise the bar for following Jesus, lower it for doing church.

Mistakes to avoid.²

- Neglect the Great Commandment for the Great Commission.
- Not taking opposition seriously.
- Love affair with the ‘idea’ of a ‘type’ church.
- Premature launch.
- Evangelism ceases after launch.
- No plan for other 6 days of the week.
- Fear of talking about money.
- Failure of the church to act its age.
- Formalizing leadership too soon.
- Using “superstar” model as paradigm for all church plants.

Homework.

- Read Acts (4 chapters/day) and note how the church is described, what it does, etc.
- Ask 3 people, “What kind of church is needed in Seattle?”

¹ Adapted from *Beyond Church Planting*, Fresh Perspectives, Bob Logan & Neil Cole

² Adapted from *10 Most Common Mistakes Made by New Church Starts*, Jim Griffith & Bill Easum

Core Values

*For a full list of Resources, please see **Appendix A**.

Core Value #1: Jesus

He is God³. All things were created by Him, for Him and through Him⁴. He is the Alpha and Omega, the first and last, the beginning and end⁵. He is the Cornerstone of the church⁶ and reality itself⁷. We exist for Him.

- What does the city think about Jesus? Where did they get that idea?
- Who is He and what has Jesus accomplished for us? (Eph. 1:3-11)
- What role does Jesus play in the world today? (Col. 1:15-20)
- Who was attracted to Jesus during His time on earth? Now? (Mt. 9:10-13)
- What would this city look like if we lived like Jesus?

Recommended Reading.

ESV Study Bible, Crossway, Good News Publishers

³ John 1:1,14; 8:58; 10:30; Mk. 14:61-62; 2 Cor. 4:4; Phil. 2:5-10; Col 2:9; Heb. 1:3,8; 1 Tim. 3:16; Mt. 1:23

⁴ Col. 1:15-20; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6

⁵ Rev. 22:13

⁶ Eph. 2:20; 1 Peter 2:6; Acts 4:11; Mt. 21:42; Mark 12:20; Luke 20:17

⁷ Col. 1:15-20; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6

Core Value #2: Gospel

The gospel is God's message of good news⁸; good news that Jesus Christ came to live, die and rise again for the forgiveness of sin⁹ to bring redeemed sinners under God's gracious reign for the renewal of all things¹⁰. The gospel brings us back home to God for life that is truly life - every day¹¹. We are a gospel-centered people.

- What does this city believe the central message of Christianity is? Where did they get that idea?
- What is the gospel? (1 Cor. 15:1-3; John 3:16-17)
- Who is the gospel for? (Luke 15:11-32)
- What would this city look like if we lived as gospel-centered people?

Homework.

- Read Ephesians. Note what is now true of those who trust in Jesus through the gospel.
- Read Luke. Note who was attracted to Jesus and who He spent time with.
- Ask 3 people, "Who was Jesus? Why does He matter?"

Recommended Reading.

"The Gospel-Centered Life", Bob Thune & Will Walker (<http://www.whm.org/gcl>)

⁸ Luke 7:22; Acts 10:36; 1 Peter 1:12

⁹ 1 Cor. 15:1-3; John 3:16-17; Gal. 1:4; 1 Peter 2:24

¹⁰ Eph. 1:3-14; Phil. 2:9,10; Mt. 5-7; Rev. 21:1-4

¹¹ Mt. 7:14; 10:39; John 1:4; 4:14; 10:10; 11:25; 20:31; Acts 5:20; 11:18; Rom. 6:4; 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:6; 2 Cor. 4:10; Phil. 2:16; 4:3; 1 Tim. 6:19; 1 John 1:1

Core Value #3: City

The city is our context. Cities are strategic centers of spiritual, social and cultural influence. As the city goes, so goes the world. In fact, the entire trajectory of human history will culminate in an urban environment.¹² Nowhere else on the planet is such diversity of people found in one place; young and old, black and white, rich and poor, known and unknown. We embrace the city, learn from the city and are for the city.

The Importance of the City.¹³

In every earthly city, there are two cities vying for control - the City of Man and the City of God.
(Augustine)

See Rev. 21. The city is the Garden of Eden, remade, the fulfillment of God's purposes in Eden.

A place of shelter for the weak and different.

- **City of God:** The city is a place of safety, shelter and community.
- **City of Man:** Under sin, the city is a refuge from God.

A cultural and human development center.

- **City of God:** The city stimulates gifts, capacities and talents of people; it inspires the deep potentialities in the human heart. The concentration of human talent, both by competition and cooperation, produces greater works of art, science and technology.
- **City of Man:** Under sin, the city becomes a place for people to make a name for themselves. It magnifies selfishness, pride and arrogance. Instead of being a treasure chest of talent that God designed, the city overflows with greed and corruption; it exposes the worst of the human heart.

A place of spiritual searching and temple building.

- **City of God:** The city was created to be a place where God dwelled at the center.
- **City of Man:** Under sin, cities are hotbeds of religious cults and idolatry. Cities breed spiritual seeking, and when Christians abandon the cities, the seekers fall into the hands of false gods, false teaching and heresies.

¹² Rev. 21:2

¹³ Tim Keller, Why New York City? May 1995, unpublished. Printed "Coaching Urban Church Planters", p10,11

Who can we reach in the city?¹⁴

If the Christian church wants to really change the nation and culture, it must go into the cities themselves, not just into the suburbs or even the exburbs. Three kinds of people live in the city, exert tremendous influence on our society, and cannot be reached by living in the suburbs. These people are 1) the elites who control the culture and who are becoming increasingly secularized; 2) the masses of new immigrants who will move into mainstream society over the next 30 years; and 3) the poor, whose dilemmas are rapidly deepening and affecting the whole country.

Why can we best reach them in the city?¹⁵

Paul's missionary work was urban-centered. Paul went to population centers, ignoring small towns and the countryside. Christianity spread more rapidly in the urban Roman Empire than in the countryside. Why? 1) People in the city were less conservative and more open to new ideas. 2) Christian evangelists found that, in the city, the gospel could spread faster into the influence centers - law, politics, arts, etc, and into diverse national groups. By the year 300 AD more than half of the urban populations of the Empire were Christian while the countryside was pagan. (The word paganus means country-man) The early church was urban. There is no intrinsic reason for urban people to be less religious, only less traditional.

What are our primary challenges in the city?¹⁶

The biggest difficulty for the Christian church...is that the city-center population is the most secular, the least churchd, and in general, the most spiritually hard to reach demographic in all of North America. Residents of city centers include: a) young corporate and creative professionals; b) leaders in the corporate and creative fields who create alliances to run the major cultural institutions of society; c) new immigrant families who work and live near city centers; d) their second-generation children seeking professional success; e) large numbers of students and academics, and f) the homosexual community (13% of Seattle).

How do we work for the urban renewal of Seattle?¹⁷

The flow of urban renewal...begins with revival in a singular congregation, moves to renewal of a regional body of Christ (church planting movement), progresses to the development of the community at large, and then culminates in the transformation of the culture. Key to this process is the discovery and application of the gospel, which brings personal renewal and spiritual revival as evidenced by the multiplication of churches.

Five Different Ministry Models.¹⁸

- I. Christ against the City.
- II. Christ of the City.
- III. Christ above the City.
- IV. Christ and the City in Paradox.
- V. Christ transforming the City.

¹⁴ Tim Keller, Why New York City? May 1995, unpublished. Printed "Coaching Urban Church Planters", p9

¹⁵ Tim Keller, Why New York City? May 1995, unpublished. Printed "Coaching Urban Church Planters", p9

¹⁶ Tim Keller, Church Multiplication and City Growth, "Coaching Urban Church Planters", p100

¹⁷ Tim Keller, Church Multiplication and City Growth, "Coaching Urban Church Planters", p99

¹⁸ Tim Keller, Redeemer Church Planting Manual, "Getting to Know the Context", p54-55

Principles for engaging the city through the gospel.¹⁹

- **The Gospel Creates New People with a New Spirit.** The Gospel gives us a God more holy than any conservative can bear and a God more loving than any liberal can fathom.
- **The Gospel Addresses the Whole Person.** The Gospel addresses the entirety of life, not just a private relationship.
- **The Gospel Produces Humility, Confidence and Courage.** The Gospel tells us that we are no different than anyone else in this city, that we have much to offer the city and that we have nothing to fear from the city.
- **The Gospel is Unique.** The Gospel combines strengths of all traditions. It calls us to be concerned for the spiritual well-being of the city (fundamentalist tradition), while having great social concern (mainline denomination tradition), with a high view of the Bible (reformed tradition), exercise of spiritual gifts and deep worship (charismatic tradition).
- **The Gospel Promotes Respect for the City.** The Gospel tells us that we are called to love and respect others, as we've been in Christ, not merely feel sorry for them. Through the Gospel we are a church for the city, not merely in the city. We love the city and expect to learn from it.

What does it practically look like to plant a church in the city?

- Intelligent preaching. Conversant with culture. Apologetics. Application. Christ-centered.
- Evangelism everywhere. Sunday gatherings. Missional communities. Relationships.
- Varied and high quality aesthetics. Everything preaches. Music. Gatherings. Web.
- Communities not groups. One community of many communities. Leadership development.
- Word and deed ministries. Justice and mercy. Sensitive social conscience. Urban needs.

How do we build this church?

• NETWORK

- What brought you to the city and how do you like living here?
 - What kind of church does this city need?
 - Do you know anyone else who loves the city that I may talk to and learn from?
 - Would you like to stay updated on what we're doing? (i.e. email, Facebook, etc)
- Who are we looking for?
 - Gatherers. Love Jesus. Influential. Big circle.
 - Bringers. New Christians with lots of non-Christian friends.
- Who are we not looking for?
 - Active members of other evangelical churches.
 - Bitter/discontent Christians.
- How do we engage non-Christians in our life?
 - If you could ask God one question, what would it be?
 - What is the toughest thing for you when considering faith and spiritual things?
 - Would you be interested in being part of a "discovering Christianity" group?

¹⁹ Adapted from "How to Plant a Center-City Church" by Tim Keller

Our Fourfold Strategy.

1. Cultivating Spirit-led communities that enjoy God, redemptively engage the city, and reach the world.

The gospel is not only meant to be proclaimed but incarnated in a given context. Acts 2:42-47 gives us a picture of the early church in which they loved God (“devoted themselves to the Apostle’s teaching”), loved others (“the fellowship”), lived a lifestyle of interdependence (“breaking of bread...had everything in common”), and lived a lifestyle of dependence on God (“prayers”).

- Downtown Cornerstone’s Vision: 10 missional, redemptive, worshipping communities in 1 year.

2. Church planting.

New churches draw in unchurched people 5-10 times the rate of older churches. Only a movement of new churches, large and small, will be able to reach a city with all of its neighborhoods and various people groups.

- Downtown Cornerstone’s Vision: 100 churches in 10 years.

3. Partner with citywide ministry organizations.

There are already many existing and established ministries in this city from who we can learn and with whom we can partner in many areas (evangelism, justice and mercy, discipleship, cultural renewal, etc). Every church has a tendency to grow lopsided in its emphasis. This can be avoided through city-wide partnerships.

- Downtown Cornerstone’s Vision: Partner with 1-2 major and 3-5 smaller ministry organizations in the areas of evangelism, justice, community, cultural renewal and church planting.

4. Become a resource church.

There will always be a great need for strong, resource churches to support the many neighborhood churches spread throughout the city. Seattle needs several large, strong, gospel-centered churches to resource smaller churches rather than compete with them.

Recommended Reading.

Cities of God, Rodney Stark

A Theology as Big as the City, Ray Bakke

Core Value #4: Church

The church is God's redeemed people. From beginning²⁰ to end²¹ God's aim is to glorify himself through a people, His people, who He is calling out from all tribes, peoples and languages through the gospel. He calls this people, the Church. We are a local expression of God's redeemed people.

Read Acts 2:42-47. Love God. Love others. Lives of interdependence. Make disciples.

"One another's".

See **Appendix B** for a list of the "One another's" throughout scripture.

Homework.

- Read Acts.

What was Paul's strategy when he entered a new city?

What are common features of the cities that he chose to visit and/or spend time in?

What can we learn?

- "Network" with at least three people this week (see above).

Recommended Reading.

Total Church, Tim chester & Steve Timmis

Tangible Kingdom, Hugh Halter & Matt Smay

²⁰ Gen. 1:27-28

²¹ Rev. 7:9-12

Core Value #5: Mission

The mission of God is to make disciples²². God sends His people, the Church, on His mission in their context to create a people for Him through the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are participating with God in his unfolding story in this great city of Seattle.

God Sends His People.

Read Genesis 12:1-5, Jeremiah 29:4-7.

Immersed in a new culture. Immersed in community. Immersed in God. Immersed in tension.²³

Q: What does “going” mean for them?

Q: What does “staying” mean?

Compare this to Jesus sending of His followers (Mt. 28:18-20; John 20:21; Acts 1:8).

Q: What does “going” mean for us?

Q: What does “staying” mean?

Abraham’s (and our) big choice.

GO

STAY

Q: Which words do you value most?

Q: As you consider your call to “Go”, what emotions are you feeling?

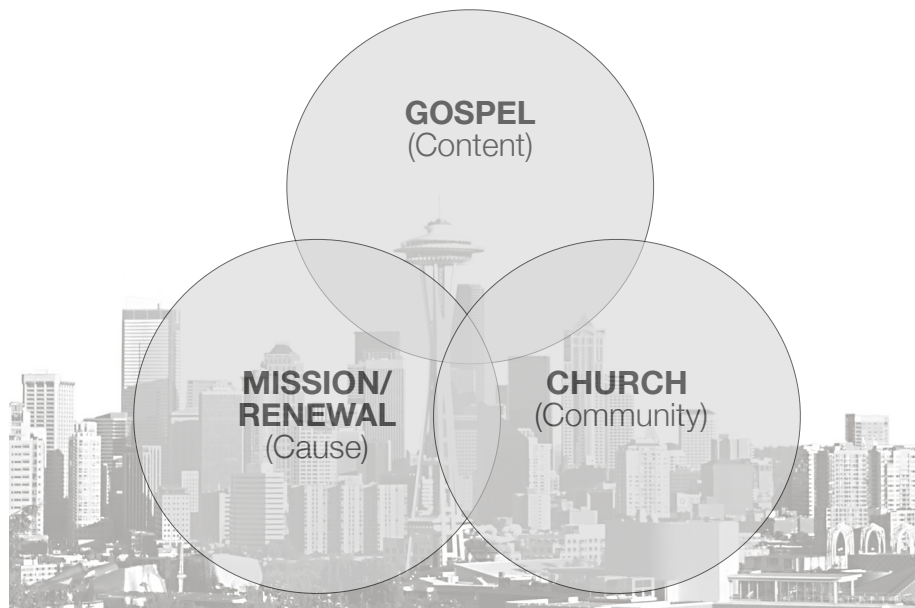
Q: What challenges get in the way of you going?

²² Mt. 28:28-20

²³ Adapted from Tangible Kingdom Primer, Halter & Smay, 1.2

The Gospel Matrix.

- The Gospel is the good news of Jesus capable of transforming everything about a person.
- The Church is God's redeemed community "sent" to redemptively engage the world.
- The Mission is to do, be and speak the good news in all aspects of life.
- The Context is Seattle.



Mission + Incarnation.

- Mission ("Go") and incarnation ("How you go") are vitally connected. (1 Thess. 2:8-9)
- To be missional is to be actively committed to living a "sent" life in the context of community.
- To be incarnational deals with how you go and what people see as you go; including posture, tone, motives, and heart. This is critical as it will eventually determine whether or not people will want to know you or your God.²⁴
- To be an incarnational community is to physically represent Jesus in a particular location; to be a group of people with the posture, tone, motives and heart of Jesus.²⁵ (e.g. Every Seattle neighborhood)²⁶

²⁴ Halter & Smay, p2.1

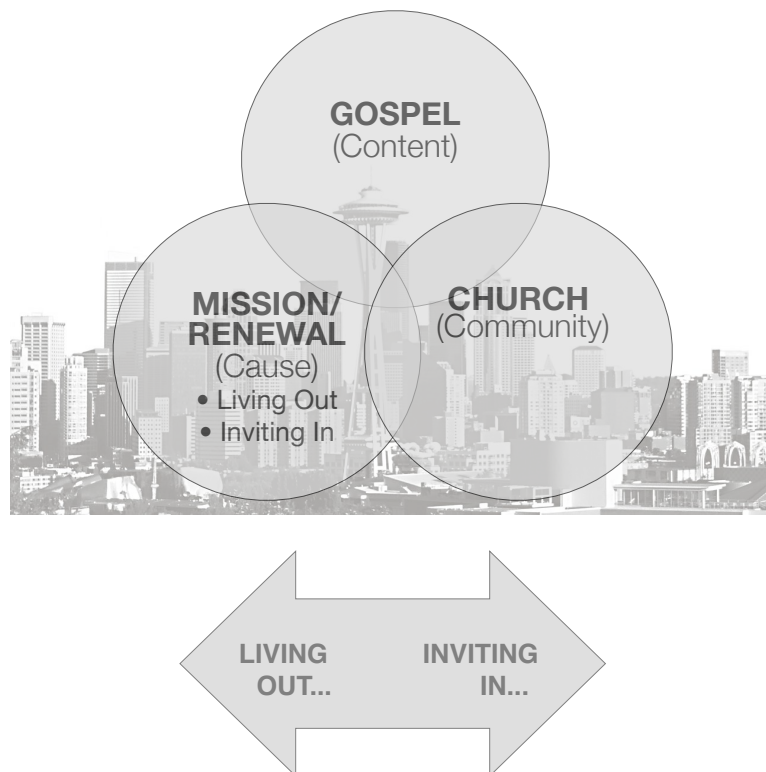
²⁵ Halter & Smay, Intro

²⁶ Compared to attractational models; Adapted from Celtic Way of Evangelism by Hunter; Halter & Smay

Attractional ("bring people in")	Incarnational ("send people out")
Unbeliever is invited to church	Sojourner is invited to belong
Unbeliever confesses belief	Sojourner confesses interest
Unbeliever repeats prayer	Sojourner experiences the good news
Believer joins church	Sojourners participates in community
Cognitive discipleship	Experiential discipleship
Focus: counting decisions	Focus: transformation
Believing enables belonging	Belonging enables believing

What does missional-incarnational community look like? Two things.

- Living Out. The natural and deliberate process of living among, listening to, and loving people in our culture with the desire to connect them to our Christian community.²⁷
- Inviting In. Integrating sojourners into the community as a result of living out the gospel with intentional hospitality and compassion.²⁸



²⁷ Halter & Smay, 5.1

²⁸ Halter & Smay, 6.1

Our Posture.

Our posture is what wins a person's respect and heart and helps them to be open to God's ways. While poor posture communicates judgment, Christ-like posture displays love. An advocate looks past the outward, and instead focuses on winning trust, building a friendship, and establishing loyalty.²⁹

- Who have you been an advocate for?
- Who in your life needs you to be an advocate for them right now?
- In what ways does your posture need to change?

Missional Ideas & Questions.

- Do your best to never turn down an invite to spend time with your community, neighbors or friends.
- In a normal week we eat 21 meals. Commit to spending at least one of those with a sojourner.
- Think through family members, friends, neighbors and coworkers among whom God might be sending you to incarnate the Gospel. What do you think it would take for them to connect with your community in the future?
- How much time per week are you willing to give to building deeper relationships with them?
- What tangible needs do they have that could be opportunities for you to be good news to them?
- What activities or hobbies do you love to do that you could invite them to share with you?
- Be attentive to "God-moments" along the way every day.

Most God-moments are unexpected and occur along the way to someplace else. They will seem like interruptions, but if you begin to look for God's fingerprints in your day and in every relationship, in every coffee shop, in every conversation you have with your neighbor, there's a good chance you will begin to see God's incarnational presence.³⁰

Enemies of Mission.

- Individualism. Belief that happiness comes from doing things alone, on my terms. It's all about me and it destroys the powerful countercultural witness of the church.
- Consumerism. Belief that happiness comes from getting what I want or think I want. Focuses on my needs and happiness over others. It's all about what I get out of it.
- Materialism. Belief that happiness comes from getting "stuff" and the "stuff" I already have. Our security rests on our "stuff" rather than God. It's all about what I have.

Recommended Reading.

Total Church, Tim Chester & Steve Timmis

Tangible Kingdom, Hugh Halter & Matt Smay

²⁹ Halter & Smay, 2.3

³⁰ Halter & Smay, p2.6

Core Value #6: Renewal

The renewal of all things is God's ultimate aim³¹. As God's redeemed people we are called by God to serve as communities of salt and light³². We are agents of renewal in this city that serve as a foretaste of what is to come. We do that by redemptively engaging the city through spiritual (gospel, communities, planting), social (mercy, justice, service) and cultural (arts, music, multimedia) renewal.

One gets the impression from certain hymns that glorified believers will spend eternity in some ethereal heaven somewhere off in space, far away from earth. The following lines from the hymn "My Jesus I Love Thee" seem to convey that impression: "In mansions of glory and endless delight / I'll ever adore thee in heaven so bright." But does such a conception do justice to biblical eschatology? Are we to spend eternity somewhere off in space, wearing white robes, plucking harps, singing songs, flitting from cloud to cloud while doing so? On the contrary, the Bible assures us that God will create a new earth on which we shall live to God's praise in glorified, resurrected bodies.³³

If redemption is the restoration of the whole of our creational life, then our mission is to embody the good news that every part of creational life, including the public life of our culture, is being restored. It will mean being good news in our care for the environment, international relations, economic justice, business, media, scholarship, family, and law. If, on the other hand, redemption is an otherworldly salvation then mission is reduced to verbal evangelism that tries to get people ready for heaven. Most of life then falls outside the mission of the church and is considered to be of secondary importance. Our witness in all of creational life breaks down. Christ has created the world including its cultural and social development. Sin has messed it up. God has redeemed it and is redeeming it and will redeem it in Christ. Our place in this story is to show and tell the good news of that redemptive work.³⁴

Q: What areas of the city need renewal, mercy, justice?

Q: How can we be good news to Seattle? Your neighborhood specifically?

Homework.

- Read the following scriptures below and note the things that God values and what these values might look like in the context of our community³⁵: (Genesis 12:1-3; Matthew 25:34-40; Acts 2:42-45; Acts 13:1-3; Romans 12:1-2; Philippians 2:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 2:7-8; 1 Peter 4:9; 1 Peter 4:10; 1 John 3:16-18; Matthew 28:18-20)

³¹ Rev. 21:1-5

³² Mt. 5:13-14

³³ Hoekema, The Bible and the Future, p274

³⁴ Michael Goheen, (Re)new(ed) Creation: The End of the Story

³⁵ Adapted from Tangible Kingdom Primer, p7.5

- Read through the following sections of scripture and write down the environment for some of Jesus' "along the way" moments. What would it look like for you (and us!) to be just as willing to be inconvenienced?

Reference	Event	Where it happened
John 2:1-10	Turned water into wine	
John 3:1-4	Talked after hours w/ Nicodemus	
John 4:4-10	Met Samaritan social outcast	
Luke 4:38-44	Healed mother-in-law	
Luke 5:1-8	Called the disciples	
Luke 5:17-21	Healed the paralytic	
Luke 7:11-19	Raised man from dead	
Luke 9:10-17	Fed the 5,000	
Luke 17:11-19	Healed the lepers	

Personal mission.

- **"Cross your fence."** Do something to bless or simply converse with one neighbor on your street or in your apartment.
- **"Cross your street."** Do something to connect with someone who is close to home, but with whom you haven't build a relationship yet.
- **"Cross a social, political or ethnic barrier."** Take someone with you from your missional community. Consider these ideas: eat at an authentically ethnic restaurant in a part of town that is unfamiliar to you, attend a lecture of an event that represents a different part of culture, visit a church or other religious location with different beliefs than your own.³⁶

Prayerfully planning mission.

- How are you going to meet and connect with sojourners? Examples: join a class, volunteer, regularly visit the same cafes, etc.
- Who are three to five people in your life that you are currently investing in relationally?

Recommended Reading.

Culture Making, Andy Crouch

You Can Change, Tim Chester

Ministries of Mercy, Tim Keller

³⁶ Halter & Smay, p1.4

Core Value #7: Movement

Do it all (previous weeks) again through the planting of church-planting-churches.

Deconstructing Church.

In our day it is all too common to believe that “church” is a building, an event, an institution, or a location. When it comes to church planting, we then think that “church” begins once a weekly service is started. Furthermore, the church we belong to is often chosen based upon what it can do for us (i.e. to meet our needs through programming, entertaining, teaching or music) rather than what Jesus wants to do through us as we commit to a local gathering of Jesus-followers. In many ways, the church has become a provider of goods to consumers rather than a community of Spirit-led Jesus-followers that enjoy God, redemptively engage the city and reach the world. As followers of Jesus it is vital that we allow the scriptures rather than contemporary Christian culture to shape and mold our understanding of the church. This may call for the creation of a new conceptual category in our brains as we allow the Bible to define “church” and not individual experiences, cultural expressions and personal preferences.

I believe a perverted and tarnished view of what a church is, constitutes one of the greatest hurdles faced by church planters. In the New Testament, the word ‘church’ was applied to a group of believers at any level, ranging from a very small group meeting in private home all the way to the group of all true believers in the universal church. (Charles Brock, *Indigenous Church Planting: A Practical Journey*, p171)

Biblically Reconstructing “Church”.

The biblical word for “church” is ekklesia (assembly or gathering), which infers we can’t experience church until we come together as God’s redeemed people. Throughout the New Testament, “church” is used to describe large groups, small groups, all the believers in a city, or all the believers in a specific region. It is a word used rather loosely to describe those who follow Jesus and regularly gather for worship, teaching from the scriptures, community, and the practice of the sacraments (Lord’s Supper and baptism) led by God-appointed leadership.

Simple shaping principles.

- A church is always used to describe a group of people.
- A church should operate under the lordship of Christ. (Heb. 3:1)
- A church should practice solid biblical teaching. (2 Tim. 4:2; Acts 2:42)
- A church should have more than three people. (Mt. 18:15-35)
- A church should be accountable to God-appointed leadership. (Titus 1:5; Heb. 13:17; 2 Tim. 2:2)
- A church should participate in the sacraments. (Mt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 11)

When we read the NT letters we often forget the context of those early believers. Paul was writing to smaller groups of people meeting in homes.

- “When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary...where they were gathered together and were praying.” Acts 12:12
- “Greet also the church in their house.” Rom. 16:5
- “The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord.” 1 Cor. 16:19
- “Give my greeting to...the church in her house.” Col 4:15
- “...and the church in your house.” Phil. 2

The NT and history both confirm that the church followed both large group and small group structures.

Purpose of the Church.

- I. Worship & Glory. (Col. 3:16; Eph. 1:12; Eph. 5:16-19)
- II. Doctrine & Growth. (Col. 1:28; Eph. 4:12-13)
- III. Evangelism & Mission. (Mt. 28:19)
- IV. Mercy & Justice. (Acts 11:29; 2 Cor. 8:4; 1 John 3:17; Luke 4:40; 6:35-36)

Worship only = joyful worship but theologically immature, irrelevant, ingrown (Contemporary)

Doctrine only = knowledge of God but spiritually dry and unloving (Fundamentalist)

Evangelism only = growing but theologically immature (Parachurch)

Mercy only = loving but little joy in worship, small, theologically immature (Liberal)

Our aim as a church is to cultivate a community with theological depth, intimate relationships, joyous worship, relentless evangelism and sacrificial service. Our aim is balance.

Why Church Plant.

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the Harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. (Jesus, Matthew 9:37-38)

“The fact is that Christianity is rapidly declining in America...17.7% of the American population [attend] church on any given weekend (2004) and established churches showed zero percent growth. The one bright spot [is] church planting. Church plants [add] an increase of 7.8%...no time in American history has the need for new churches been more critical. New church planters are needed now to scale back the decline and death of existing churches. In order to survive Christ's church must be replanted in every generation.” (Joel Comiskey, *Planting Churches that Reproduce*, p28)

Planting new churches is the most effective evangelistic methodology known under heaven. (C. Peter Wagner, *Strategic Growth*, p168)

Dozens of studies confirm that the average new church gains most of its new members (60-80%) from the ranks of people who are not attending any worshipping body, while churches over 10-15 years of age gain 80-90% of new members by transfer from other congregations. This means that the average new [church] will bring 6-8 times more new people into the life of the Body of Christ than an older congregation of the same size. (Tim Keller, *Church Planting Manual*, p30)

What does this mean practically? The only wide-scale way to bring in lots of new Christians to the Body of Christ in a permanent way is to plant new churches. (Tim Keller, *Church Planting Manual*, p30)

Statistics do not support the assumption that size is necessarily the best way to reach people. Though large churches are often more cost effective than small churches, new churches are more effective than large churches, particularly in evangelism. On a per-capita basis, new churches win more people to Christ than established churches. (Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, p7)

Simple shaping principles.

- Jesus' most fundamental call was to plant churches. (Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)
- The Apostle Paul's strategy was to plant urban churches. (cf Acts 16:9,12)

Why should we start new churches when so many struggle and die?

Saving dead and dying churches is more difficult and ultimately more costly than starting new ones. Some authorities even argue that changing a rigid, tradition-bound congregation is almost impossible...starting new churches is much easier and, perhaps, a better overall stewardship of kingdom resources, just as it's sometimes more cost-effective to purchase a new vehicle, rather than pouring money into an old one to keep it running like new.³⁷

Church plants need new people, new ideas and new vision if they are going to emerge out of the darkness into the sunlight. Established churches tend to be more concerned about building upkeep, the personality of the preacher, who's on the board, and the program schedule for the upcoming year...Church plants are completely stripped of all illusions. Do or die. Reach out or close the doors. Invite or implode. Church [plants] are desperate for growth. Without growth, the church folds. This reality keeps church [plants] on their knees, crying out to God.³⁸

Unless church plants organize around evangelism, no one will show up. After all, most Christians would rather worship in a full-service church where their needs are met.³⁹

Example.⁴⁰

Town A, Town B and Town C are the same size and they each have 100 churches.

- In Town A, all the churches are over 15 years old. The number of active Christian churchgoers in the town will be shrinking, even if four or five of the churches get very “hot” and double attendance.
- In town B, five of the churches are under 15 years old, and they along with several older churches are winning new people to Christ, but this only offsets the normal declines of the older churches. Thus, the overall number of active Christian churchgoers in that town will be staying the same.
- In Town C, 30 of the churches are under 15 years old. In this town, the overall number of active Christian churchgoers will be on a path to grow 50% in a generation.

What about Seattle?

Within a five mile radius of the downtown core of Seattle there are (very) roughly 100 Christian churches. The vast majority are mainline denominational (Catholic, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, etc). The second largest group are ethnic churches in the Central District and Rainier Valley with a very specific target group. Most of the “new” churches are over 10 years old. To my knowledge there are fewer than five new churches under five years old (evangelical Christian) in the Seattle area.

There is a great need for movement of Gospel-centered, Jesus-loving, missional churches.

Our Strategy.

(i.e. How are we going to build a great city for the glory of God?)

- I. Cultivate communities of Spirit-led Jesus-followers.
- II. Sunday gatherings.
- III. Leadership development (in the context of community).
- IV. Plant churches.

³⁷ Stetzer, p11

³⁸ Comiskey, p31

³⁹ Comiskey, p30

⁴⁰ Tim Keller, *Church Planting Manual*, p31

Simple shaping principles.

- We are a sent people - sent across the street and around the world.
- Mission begins at home and expands from there. (Acts 1:8)
- Living organisms grow. Healthy disciples/communities/churches produce disciples/communities/churches.
- As we plant and multiply communities, church planters will arise.
- We are an urban multiplication center.

Summary.

- See as many people meet Jesus as possible. (1 Cor. 9:22-23)
- Create an environment in which we may present everyone mature in Christ. (Col. 1:28)
- Multiply disciples, communities and churches.

Homework.

Read.

- In preparation for the *Gospel Centered Life**, read Romans which deals with what the gospel is. As an option, read Galatians which deals with what the gospel is not.

Personal mission.

- Challenge this week. Meet 10 new people. Converse with 5. Invite 1. (10:5:1)

Prayerfully planning mission.

- How are you going to meet and connect with sojourners? Examples: join a class, volunteer, regularly visit the same cafes, etc.
- Who are three to five people in your life that you are currently investing in relationally?

*Please see **Appendix A** for this resource.

Recommended Reading.

Church Planting Movements, David Garrison

Vision in Action: Prayer

Enjoy God	Redemptively Engage the City	Reach the World
Gospel Means of Grace (Bible, Prayer, Rest)	Prayer Bless Hospitality Converse Participate	Diversity Neighbors City World

Scripture.

Matthew 6:8 “Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

Matthew 21:22 “Whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith,”

Mark 11:24 “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

Luke 11:9-13 “And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

James 4:2 “You do not have, because you do not ask.”

1 John 5:14-15 “This is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of him.”

Guiding Principles of Corporate Prayer.

- It’s about Jesus.
- Ask God to warm your heart in prayer, confess sin and unbelief, ask the Holy Spirit to search you.
- We pray together to agree together.
- Remember there are other people. Keep it short.
- Listen, agree and respond to the prayers of others.
- Be attentive to the Spirit and His nudging.
- Pray to God as Dad.
- Be yourself.

Vision in Action: Bless

Enjoy God	Redemptively Engage the City	Reach the World
Gospel Means of Grace (Bible, Prayer, Rest)	Prayer Bless Hospitality Converse Participate	Diversity Neighbors City World

1 Bible

- God's pattern. Blessed to be a blessing.
- Abraham in Gen. 12:1-3 "I will bless you...so that you will be a blessing."
- Sermon on the Mount. Mt. 5:2-11 ("blessed"). Compare to 5:13-14 ("blessing").
- Ex: Eph. 5:2 Love one another, Rom. 15:7 welcome one another, etc.

2 Application

- In Christ, we are blessed to be a blessing.
- Are you a blessing to those around you?
- What does your life demonstrate Jesus has done for you? (i.e. living out the gospel)
- What would our city look like if every Christian lived this way?
- Our actions are the best indicators of what we believe. Not our words.

3 This Week

- Continue to pray (as last week). Trust Jesus. Enjoy your Father.
- Ask God to bring FIVE people to you to ask, "How can I pray for you?"
- Similarly, ask God for the wisdom to see and know how you can be a *blessing* to those He has providentially placed around you.
- Pray for Seattle, your friends, neighbors, coworkers as you work, play, and walk.

Vision in Action: Hospitality

Enjoy God	Redemptively Engage the City	Reach the World
Gospel Means of Grace (Bible, Prayer, Rest)	Prayer Bless Hospitality Converse Participate	Diversity Neighbors City World

1 Bible

- God's pattern. Welcoming strangers, sinners and enemies.
- Rom. 5:8 "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
- Rom. 15:7 "Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."
- Rom. 12:13 "Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality."
- Mt. 25:35 "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me."
- Gal. 6:10 "Let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."
- 1 Pet. 4:9 "Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another...in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ."

2 Application

- Are you welcoming others as you've been welcomed by Christ?
- Are you hospitable?
- What does your life demonstrate Jesus has done for you? (i.e. living out the gospel)
- What would our city look like if every Christian lived this way (hospitable)?
- Our actions are the best indicators of what we believe. Not our words.

3 This Week

- Continue to pray. Trust Jesus. Enjoy your Father.
- Show (or plan to show) hospitality to a neighbor, coworker, unbelieving friend this week.
- Let's say you eat 3 meals a day each week (21 meals/week). Share at least one with a nonbeliever weekly.
- Ask God to bring FIVE people to you to ask, "How can I pray for you?"
- How can you bless those around you this week?
- Pray for Seattle, your friends, neighbors, coworkers as you work, play, and walk.

Vision in Action: Converse

Enjoy God	Redemptively Engage the City	Reach the World
Gospel Means of Grace (Bible, Prayer, Rest)	Prayer Bless Hospitality Converse Participate	Diversity Neighbors City World

1 Bible

- **God created all people.** Gen. 1:27 “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”; Ps. 139:13 “You knitted me together in my mother’s womb.”; Jer. 1:5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.”
- **Everyone has a story.** Ps. 139:16 “In your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me.”; Ps. 56:8 “You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?”
- **Part of loving people is knowing people.** Mt. 22:37 “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”; Mt. 7:12 “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”
- **Generally, we need to know people to share with people.** 1 Cor. 9:22, 23 “I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.”

2 Application

- Who are you getting to know right now? Do you know their story?
- How can you engage more people in simple conversation out of love?
- How can you be a better listener for God’s glory?
- What difference do you think it could make in your relationships?
- How may Jesus be inviting you to step out in faith in this area?

3 This Week

- Continue to pray. Trust Jesus. Enjoy your Father.
- As you engage people this week, learn their story (over a meal, coffee, on a walk, etc).
- Try to meet 10 new people this week, converse with 5, invite 1 (10:5:1).
- Show (or plan to show) hospitality to a neighbor, coworker, unbelieving friend this week.
- Let’s say you eat 3 meals a day each week (21 meals/week). Share at least one with a nonbeliever weekly.
- How can you bless and pray for those around you this week?

God, Gospel & Life: Our City

Note: This fall we will continue our study of the Gospel and how it changes everything, starting in our life, extending into our community, for the benefit of the city and world. This study will include some direct quotes, adapted lessons and indirect organizational queues from a number of resources, including *Total Church* (Steve Timmis and Tim Chester), *Tangible Kingdom* (Hugh Halter and Matt Smay) and *Gospel in Life* (Tim Keller). Our objective is to gain a greater understanding of who God is, what He has done, who we are and what we are now sent by Him to do in this city. My prayer is that we grow more deeply in love with our God, who first loved us, and those of our great city.

Scripture.

Read Jeremiah 29:4-14.

Discussion.

What specific directions does God give the exiles for relating to the city of Babylon (v. 4-7)? How do you think the exiles felt about this?

What is the relationship between the “plans for wholeness” of v. 11 and the “welfare of the city” of v. 7?

What was the purpose of the exile (see v. 11-14)? Why do you think these verses were included in the letter?

Christianity served as a revitalization movement that arose in response to the misery, chaos, fear and brutality of life in the urban Greco-Roman world...Christianity revitalized life in...cities by providing new norms and new kinds of social relationships able to cope with many urgent urban problems. To cities filled with the homeless and impoverished, Christianity offered charity as well as hope. To cities filled with newcomers and strangers, Christianity offered an immediate basis for attachments...To cities torn by violent ethnic strife, Christianity offered a new basis for social solidarity. And to cities faced with epidemics, fires and earthquakes, Christianity offered effective...services. (Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (New York: Harper, 1997), p161 as quoted by Tim Keller, *Gospel in Life*)

Is this still true of Christianity today? If not, why not? In what ways does Christianity “revitalize life” in our city, neighborhoods, workplaces?

Word.

City Under God.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

City Under Sin.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

How?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

What struck? Questions?

J.N. Manokaran, a pastor from India, writes in his book *Christ and Cities*, "Cities should not be seen as monsters...but communities of people with need." How do you view Seattle? What emotions come to mind? What do you value about it?

Have you ever encountered poor who are more open to the gospel than you are? Or, people of other religions or no religion, who are wiser, kinder and more grace-filled than you? Examples.

It is often said that Christians today have little impact on the world around them. Is that a correct assessment? Why? What prevents us from becoming more engaged in the world around us?

The Hebrew word translated "prosper" means "to be healthy, to increase, to have things go well." It means growth in all its dimensions. What types of growth within the Christian community can prosper the places in which we live?

In what specific ways can we seek to serve and love Seattle, rather than resemble it, or remove ourselves from it? What can we do to become genuinely interested in its peace and prosperity?

Homework.

Read article “Centrality of the Gospel” by Tim Keller*

Read “Introduction” and “Why Gospel?”, *Total Church*, Chester & Timmis

*Please see **Appendix A** for this article.

Questions.

Do you agree that “religion is the default mode of the human heart” (Calvin)? At what specific times or in what circumstances has this been true of your own heart?

In what ways do you attempt to merit the favor of God by works (i.e. doing good things)?

In your own words, what is Christian righteousness? What is the alternative to Christian righteousness?

What does it mean to rely on our sanctification for our justification?

What stood out to you from your reading of “Why Gospel?” from *Total Church*?

Write down how you would describe the gospel if someone asked you, “So what is the Gospel?”

God, Gospel & Life: Good News

Note: This fall we will continue our study of the Gospel and how it changes everything, starting in our life, extending into our community, for the benefit of the city and world. This study will include some direct quotes, adapted lessons and indirect organizational queues from a number of resources, including *Total Church* (Steve Timmis and Tim Chester), *Tangible Kingdom* (Hugh Halter and Matt Smay) and *Gospel in Life* (Tim Keller). Our objective is to gain a greater understanding of who God is, what He has done, who we are and what we are now sent by Him to do in this city. My prayer is that we grow more deeply in love with our God, who first loved us, and those of our great city.

Scripture.

Read Luke 18:9–14.

Discussion.

Considering what the Pharisee says about himself in v. 11-12, is he a hypocrite? Why or why not?

What does the Pharisee understand righteousness to be and how do we achieve it?

The tax collector does not actually say what you see in the English translation of v. 13, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” He uses a definite article in the Greek. He says, “God, have mercy on me, the sinner.” What can we learn about repentance from the attitude of the tax collector?

‘Justification’ is a legal term, borrowed from the law courts. It is the exact opposite of ‘condemnation’. ‘To condemn’ is to declare somebody guilty; ‘to justify’ is to declare him...righteous. In the Bible it refers to God’s act of unmerited favor by which He puts a sinner right with Himself, not only pardoning or acquitting him, but accepting him and treating him as righteous. (John Stott, *The Message of Galatians* (Chicago: IVP, 1968), p60 as quoted by Tim Keller, *Gospel in Life*, p33)

Jesus says the tax collector went home “justified” before God. Why? What does this passage teach us about justification?

Word.

Read Luke 15:11-32.

What struck? Questions?

Which of the two brothers do you identify with the most? Why?

What emotions and attitudes does the elder brother display, and what does this show about his relationship with God?

What do you think it means “to repent not only of our bad things, but also for the reason we did our good things”?

If we’re justified by grace alone, not by our good works or our moral efforts or anything we can do, what motivates us to live an obedient, repentant life?

If Jesus is our true elder brother, how does it change the way we live on a daily basis?

Additional resources.

Prodigal God, by Tim Keller

Living the Cross Centered Life, by CJ Mahaney

Homework.

Read compiled list of “One Another’s”*

Read “Introduction”, “Why Gospel?”, “Why Community?” *Total Church*, Chester & Timmis

*Please see **Appendix B** for this resource.

Questions.

John Stott writes,

God means his church to be a community of mutual support. “Comfort one another”, Paul writes (1 Thess. 4:18); “encourage one another,” and “build each other up” (1 Thess. 5:11)...The word “one another” or “each other” (allelai) emphasizes the reciprocity of Christian care. We are not to leave it to elite professional comforters or counselors. These have an important role to fulfill, of course, but supporting, caring, encouraging and comforting are ministries which belong to all members of the Body of Christ. (John Stott, *The Message of 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 115 as quoted by Tim Keller, *Gospel in Life*, 63)

Do you agree? Read through the “One Another’s” on the following pages and write down some specific ways we can practice these together.

As you read the “One Another’s”, describe what a community that lives these out looks like. How would the “world” view this type of community? How is this type of community different than one not centered on the gospel?

Read Gen. 2:18. What is the only thing in all of God’s good creation that was not good? What does that teach us about community and God’s intention for it?

What are some positive and negative examples of community that you’ve experienced?

What are your biggest hopes and fears as you think about the potential of being involved in a Christian community?

What would need to change to incorporate more opportunities for community to take place in your life? What might you have to give up to make more time for community? What benefits might you gain by going deeper into community?

List some of the things that contribute to individualism in your life...at work, at home, with your time, with your faith...how could you include others in these?

Some other quotes to consider...

He who loves his dream of a community more than the Christian community itself becomes a destroyer of the latter, even though his personal intentions may be ever so honest and earnest and sacrificial. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, as quoted Hall & Smay, *Tangible Kingdom Primer*, p4-5)

The first service that one owes to others in the fellowship consists in listening to them. Just as love to God begins with listening to His Word, so the beginning of love for [others] is learning to listen to them...Listening can be greater service than speaking...There is a kind of listening...an impatient, inattentive, listening, that ...is only waiting for a chance to speak and thus get rid of the other person. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, p97-98 as quoted by Tim Keller, *Gospel in Life*, p63)

The only way God's people can consistently obey all of his commands is as the entire Christian community worldwide, and any local expression of it increasingly captures the vision of sharing its resources with the needy in its midst. When believers realize that others will care for them if they unexpectedly find themselves impoverished, they can then be freed to give more generously in times of plenty. (Craig Blomberg, *Neither Poverty Nor Riches*, p145 as quoted by Tim Keller, *Gospel in Life*, p67)

The second service that one should perform for another in a Christian community is that of active helpfulness. This means, initially, simple assistance in trifling, external matters...We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God. God will be constantly canceling our plans by sending us people with claims and petitions. We may pass them by, preoccupied with our more important tasks, as the priest passed the man who had fallen among thieves, perhaps reading the Bible. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, p99 as quoted by Tim Keller, *Gospel in Life*, p67)

We are a community. We are not ourselves by ourselves. We are born into communities, we live in communities, we die in communities. Human beings are not solitary, self-sufficient creatures. (Eugene Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, p99, as quoted by Tim Keller, *Gospel in Life*, p71)

Confess your faults one to another" (James 5:16)...A man who confesses his sins in the presence of a brother knows that he is no longer alone with himself; he experiences the presence of God in the reality of the other person. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, p110-116, as quoted by Tim Keller, *Gospel in Life*, p71)

God, Gospel & Life: Community

Note: This fall we will continue our study of the Gospel and how it changes everything, starting in our life, extending into our community, for the benefit of the city and world. This study will include some direct quotes, adapted lessons and indirect organizational queues from a number of resources, including *Total Church* (Steve Timmis and Tim Chester), *Tangible Kingdom* (Hugh Halter and Matt Smay) and *Gospel in Life* (Tim Keller). Our objective is to gain a greater understanding of who God is, what He has done, who we are and what we are now sent by Him to do in this city. My prayer is that we grow more deeply in love with our God, who first loved us, and those of our great city.

Scripture.

Read Acts 2:42–47.

Discussion.

What do we discover about how the early church learned together? What do we discover about fellowship and service? What can we learn from this?

What kinds of churches base their model on this passage? What are the pro's and con's of each?

- **Teaching** Churches (v42 “to the apostles’ *teaching*”)
- **Charismatic** Churches (v43) “awe came upon every soul”)
- **Attractional** Churches (v46,43 “attending the temple” and “awe”)
- **Incarnational** Churches (v46,47 “in their homes” and “favor with all the people”)
- **Traditional** Churches (v42 “to the *apostles*’ teaching”)
- **Community** Churches (v44 “all things in *common*”)
- **Seeker** Churches (v47 “having favor with *all the people*”)
- **Social-Justice** Churches (v45 “distributing proceeds to all, as *any had need*”)

Which “type” of church do you naturally gravitate towards? Do you assign a moral value to it?

What type of church is God expecting Downtown Cornerstone to be?

The church is...made up of natural enemies. What binds us together is not common educations, common race, common income levels, common politics, common nationality, common accents, common jobs, or anything else of that sort. Christians come together...because they have all been saved by Jesus Christ and owe him a common allegiance...They are a band of natural enemies who love one another for Jesus' sake. (DA Carson, *Love in Hard Places* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2001), p61 as quoted by Tim Keller, *Gospel in Life*, p75)

The gospel does not become public truth for a society by being propagated as a theory or as a worldview and certainly not as a religion. It can become public truth only insofar as it is embodied in a society (the church) which is both 'abiding in' Christ and engaged in the life of the world. (Lesslie Newbigin, *Proper Confidence: Faith, Doubt and Certainty in Christian Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995), p39 as quoted by Tim Keller, *Gospel in Life*, p85)

Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not? What are specific examples you have of this?

Word.

Read 1 Peter 2:9-12.

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden." (Mt. 5:14, ESV)

"To be a holy nation means we are to be..."

"To be a royal priesthood means we are to be..."

Practically, this means:

What, then, does it mean to be a "city on a hill"?

Jesus' command to be a "city on a hill" is a communal command. We cannot be a city on our own, but together. We can be obedient as individuals, but communally disobedient. In this time, between the present age and the age to come, we are building an alternate city together as a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a city on a hill that cannot be hidden.

What struck? Questions? Anything new?

Are we becoming this sort of community? What can we do to cultivate this type of community?

What practices make a good, strong, healthy Christian community? What are some practical ways we can deepen our life together?

How can we naturally love people we do not naturally like?

Look at the following list derived from Romans 12-

Love honestly, speaking out against what is wrong. (v9)
Love even unattractive people, b/c they are your brothers and sisters. (v10)
Love by making others feel honored and valuable. (v10)
Love by being generous in practical ways with your home, money and time. (v13)
Love without bitterness. Don't "pay others back," or hold resentment against others (v14)
Love with empathy. Be willing to be emotionally involved with others. (v15)
Love with humility. Be willing to associate with people who differ from you. (v16)

In what areas are we the weakest? Why? What practical steps can we take to improve?

What will Seattle look like if we live as a "city on a hill"?

Additional resources.

Total Church, by Tim Chester and Steve Timmis

Life Together, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Homework.

Read "Evangelism", *Total Church*, Chester & Timmis

Questions.

How to Make Drinking Bubble Tea (or Happy Hour, First Thursday, UGM) Missional

One of our goals as a church is to cultivate communities that enjoy God, redemptively engage the city and reach the world. These are communities in which the Bible is studied, we pray together, sin is repented of, mission occurs and life is shared. This is starting to happen with our launch community. It seems like we're actually beginning to enjoy one another. Have you noticed?

One of the ways we continue to cultivate this is by spending weekly time together outside of our Sunday gatherings, whether at a Happy Hour, pumpkin patch, or art museum.

There are multiple goals for these times, including:

- **Growing** in relationship with one another as we interact and share life through regular rhythms of meeting.
- **Seeing** our city from different angles in different neighborhoods.
- **Being** regularly reminded that only the gospel could bring such a unique and eclectic group of people together, let alone become friends.
- **Providing** weekly rhythms to invite friends, family and neighbors to hang out during a time other than Sunday.

That said, how do we make these times “missional”? (i.e. use them intentionally to reach out to and build relationships with non-believers). Consider the following:

First, keep in mind that though we use “church” communication portals (like The City) to plan and communicate these events, these are not just “church” events but friends coming together to enjoy one another and the city – though we are all part of the same church. This isn't a bait-and-switch. It's ok to introduce someone as your friend and not just “this person from church.”

Second, we all probably have not-yet-Christians in our lives that we want to hang out with but just don't have time to. These weekly rhythms of community are perfect opportunities to invite others in to hang out and experience a slice of Christian community.

Third, on that note, please never ever ever ever assume someone is a Christian. Just because one of us brings a friend we must not assume that friend trusts and follows Jesus. That could, and already has, make for awkward moments and shows a lack of care for those people as we make assumptions without getting to know them.

Fourth, when we're out in the city engage the people of the city. Start up conversations with artists, baristas, etc. Personally, I make it a goal to meet three new people every time we're out to learn more about the city and those Jesus has sent us to love, serve and challenge through the gospel.

Fifth, it takes community to build community. None of us, by ourselves, can make community happen. Though I can influence the direction things go and the shape they take, I can't just make community happen alone.

“So whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do it all for the glory of God.” (1 Cor. 10:31)

***Oikos* Evangelism** ⁴¹

In the book of Acts the main method of evangelism is “household evangelism.” Look up Acts 10:24; 16:15,31; and 18:8. *Oikos*, the Greek word for “household,” means far more than the nuclear family. A Greco-Roman household included not only several generations of the same family, but also servants, their families, friends, and business associates.

An *oikos* is a web of relationships held in common:

- Kinship affinity (relatives)
- Geographical affinity (neighbors)
- Professional affinity (coworkers)
- Associational affinities (special interest colleagues)
- Friends

In *oikos* evangelism:

- Your life is under observation by those who don’t believe.
- Your life is the attractor and evidence for the truth of the faith. People should get a very good view of how Christianity works in a life.
- The other person is “in the driver’s seat.” They get to raise questions and determine the speed of the process.
- The humbling nature of the gospel leads us to approach people without superiority and with deep respect.

List five people in your *oikos*.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Begin to pray for them regularly and invite them to an upcoming event.

⁴¹ Adapted from *Gospel in Life*, Tim Keller, p81-82

Last Week.

Last week you read “Why Gospel?” from *Total Church*. On page 33 Chester and Timmis ask a series of questions in which you imagine you are participating in a cross-cultural church planting situation. Answer these questions and reflect on how this may impact your thinking and participation with DCC.

- What criteria would you use to decide where to live?
- How would you approach secular employment?
- What standard of living would you expect as pioneer missionaries?
- What would you spend your time doing?
- What opportunities would you be looking for?
- What would your prayers be like?
- What would you be trying to do with your new friends?
- What kind of team would you want around you?
- How would you conduct your meetings together?

God, Gospel & Life: Befriending Sinners

(as Redeemed Sinners)

Note: This fall we will continue our study of the Gospel and how it changes everything, starting in our life, extending into our community, for the benefit of the city and world. This study will include some direct quotes, adapted lessons and indirect organizational queues from a number of resources, including *Total Church* (Steve Timmis and Tim Chester), *Tangible Kingdom* (Hugh Halter and Matt Smay) and *Gospel in Life* (Tim Keller). Our objective is to gain a greater understanding of who God is, what He has done, who we are and what we are now sent by Him to do in this city. My prayer is that we grow more deeply in love with our God, who first loved us, and those of our great city.

Scripture.

- Mark 1:14-15, 38 (Why did Jesus come?)
- John 17:20-23 (What does this say about the church's role in mission?)
- Matthew 28:18-20 (What do we learn is central to fulfilling the Great Commission?)
- Romans 10:14-17 (How does faith come?)

Our Context.

Why is this important?

The missional landscape has changed over the last century. In the West, for nearly 1,000 years, the relationship between Christian churches to broader culture was called "Christendom". Institutions of society (government, business, schools, Hollywood, etc.) "Christianized" people and stigmatized non-Christian belief and behavior. The result was that people were "Christianized" by culture, but not regenerated or converted by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel.

This resulted in generations of people who believed they were Christians, because they knew *of* Jesus, but had no relationship *with* Jesus. Therefore, in this context, the church's job was to challenge people into a vital, living relationship with Christ. The advantage was that there was a common language for public moral discourse and a generally agreed upon understanding of what was "good". The disadvantage was that morality without gospel-changed hearts led to cruelty, hypocrisy and religion at its worst. Think of how small towns treated an unwed mother or someone of a homosexual orientation.

Christendom has been on the decline since the 1800's. This decline accelerated after WWII. Europe, which was once the center of Western Christianity, has seen some of the most significant declines, while the US and Canada are not too far behind. Lesslie Newbigin, a well known British pastor and missiologist, went to India around 1950 and returned to England in 1980 (30 years later). Upon his return, he made the observation that the Church now existed in a non-Christian society because it had not adapted to its new situation. The church was just assuming people would show up, because that's what they used to do.

Why did this happen?

Answer: The Church in the West had not become missional by...

Adapting and reformulating absolutely everything it did in worship, discipleship, community and service so as to be engaged with the non-Christian society around it. It had not developed a 'missiology of culture the way it had done so for other non-believing cultures...remaining enclaves of 'Christendom' will have to learn how to become 'missional'. If it does not do that it will decline or die. We don't simply need evangelistic churches, but rather 'missional' churches. (Tim Keller, *The Changing Missional Landscape*)

Today, when people think of Christianity, they are typically thinking of Christendom (though they wouldn't use that term) and all of its negative side effects (i.e. moralism, religion, judgment, close-mindedness, etc).

What do you think of when you hear "evangelism"?

It is nearly impossible to talk about evangelism without Christians groaning inwardly. Why is that?

So, what does it mean for us to be missional and practice biblical evangelism?

Evangelism is one poor beggar telling another poor beggar where to find bread. (D.T. Niles)

Many Christians fail to share their faith because they are trying to do it perfectly, and since they cannot do it perfectly, they remain silent...what really convinces others of the truth of the Christian message is not our perfection or our rational arguments, but our willingness to love them where they are and to introduce them to our community of faith. (John Miller, *A Faith Worth Sharing*, p44)

A) The Message of the Mission.

Evangelism is Word-centered.

The Gospel is the good news that God became man in Jesus Christ to live, die and rise again for the forgiveness of sin and life with Him forever, starting now.

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you— unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:1–3, ESV)

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:14–17, ESV)

1) Good News vs Good Advice.

2) A common error.

Preach the gospel always; if necessary use words. ([allegedly] St. Francis of Assisi)

Acts of service done or people are invited to experience Christian worship. But without words of explanation these are like signposts pointing nowhere or, worse still, signposts pointing to our good works. (*Total Church*, p54)

3) Word and works go together.

Jesus demonstrates the veracity of his proclamation of God's kingship through his words and deeds, culminating in his crucifixion and resurrection. (*Total Church*, p54-55)

B) The Context of the Mission.

Evangelism is church/community-centered.

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. (John 17:20-23, ESV)

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. (1 Peter 2:9-12, ESV)

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:34-35, ESV)

So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. (1 Thessalonians 2:8, ESV)

C) The Method of the Mission.

Build relationships + Share the gospel + Introduce to community.

Notes.

- The sequence is not important.
- Evangelism is possible with two, but strongest with three.

Option #1: Building relationships + Introducing others to community (-) Sharing the Gospel = **Liberalism** (lacking biblical truth)

Option #2: Introducing others to community + Sharing the Gospel (-) Building relationships = **Fundamentalism** (lacking biblical mission)

Option #3: Building relationships + Sharing the Gospel (-) Introducing others to community = **Parachurch** (lacking biblical church)

1) Building relationships. Who has God placed around you?

People want a form of evangelism they can stick in their schedules, switch off, and leave behind when they go home. Jesus calls us to a lifestyle of love. (*Total Church*, p57-58)

Major events have a role to play in church life, but the bedrock of gospel ministry is low-key, ordinary, day-to-day work that often goes unseen. Most gospel ministry involves ordinary people doing ordinary things with gospel intentionality. (*Total Church*, p63)

2) Sharing the Gospel. Are you sharing the Gospel?

Christians whose love for the Lord Jesus flows from new hearts kept soft by the Holy Spirit have an instinctive desire to commend their Savior to others. (*Total Church*, p54)

a) Living Every Day Life with Gospel Intentionality.

Our mission from Jesus is to live as ordinary people doing ordinary things with gospel intentionality. We don't need programs, projects or ministries for mission and evangelism to take place - just meaningful friendships with those that don't yet know the King of Kings, with the hope of reaching the point where we can open the Bible with them. Rethinking evangelism as something that happens through relationship radically changes (and challenges) our Western paradigm.

Share the Gospel as a story. > Connect to their story. > Share your story.

Creation > How is the hand of the beautiful Creator evident in their lives?

Fall > How are the effects of sin and brokenness evident in their lives?

Redemption > How does God want to offer them redemption, forgiveness, hope, healing?

Restoration > How do their desires reveal a God-given desire for the world that is to come?

3) Introducing to Community. Are you inviting them in?

But evangelism is best done out of the context of a gospel community whose corporate life demonstrates the reality of the word that gave her life. (*Total Church*, p58)

a) Everyone has a role. (building relationships, socialites, hospitality, initiating gospel conversations, confronting heart issues, etc.)

b) The church is the witness to the power of the Gospel. (John 17:20-23; 1 Peter 2:9-12)

Questions.

- In what ways are you prone to drift towards Christendom evangelism?
- What is the primary obstacle to mission in your life? How does it reveal “unbelief”?
- What would it look like to make your existing schedule missional?
- Who has God placed in your life that does not yet know Him?
- Practically, who are you going to intentionally pursue? How?
- What does repentance look like for you in this area?
- What is your first step?

Homework.

Read “Church Planting” & “World Mission”, *Total Church*, Chester & Timmis

Read “Talking About Idolatry in a Postmodern Age”*

*Please see **Appendix A** for this article.

Some other quotes to consider...

All those who do not at all times trust God and do not in all their works or sufferings, life and death, trust in His favor, grace and good-will, but seek His favor in other things or in themselves, do not keep this [First] Commandment, and practice real idolatry, even if they were to do the works of all the other Commandments, and in addition had all the prayers, obedience, patience, and chastity of all the saints combined. For the chief work is not present, without which all the others are nothing but mere sham, show and pretense, with nothing back of them... If we doubt or do not believe that God is gracious to us and is pleased with us, or if we presumptuously expect to please Him only through and after our works, then it is all pure deception, outwardly honoring God, but inwardly setting up self as a false [savior]... (Martin Luther from "A Treatise on Good Works")

Because we are, each of us, the image of God, we will worship, in fact we must worship, someone or something, either our original, as we should, or, with the illusion that we are the original or our own ultimate point of reference, ourselves. If the latter, we will give ourselves over, with the full, still efficient resources of our imaging capacities, to some figment, some distorted image, focused on ourselves or on some aspect of the world, ultimately seen as an extension of ourselves. What Calvin observed long ago is no less true today: the human heart, our image-bearing and image-fashioning nature, is an idol factory. (Richard Gaffin from "Speech and the Image of God" in *The Pattern of Sound Doctrine*)

Identify your idols.

- What is your greatest nightmare? What do you worry about most?
- What do you rely on or comfort yourself with when things go badly or become difficult?
- What makes you feel the most self-worth? What are you proudest of?
- What do you really want and expect out of life? What would really make you happy?

"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if...I have power and influence over others." (Power idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if...I am loved and respected by ____." (Approval idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if... I have this kind of pleasure experience, a particular quality of life." (Comfort idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if... I am able to get mastery over my life in the area of ____." (Control idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if... people are dependent on me and need me." (Helping idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if... someone is there to protect me and keep me safe." (Dependence idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if... I am completely free from obligations/responsibilities to take care of someone." (Independence idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if... I am highly productive and getting a lot done." (Work idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if... I am being recognized for my accomplishments, and I am excelling in my work." (Achievement idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if... I have certain level of wealth, financial freedom, and very nice possessions." (Materialism idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if... I am adhering to my religion's moral codes and accomplished in its activities." (Religion idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if... this one person is in my life and happy to be there, and/or happy with me." (Individual idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if... I feel I am totally independent of organized religion, living by a self-made morality." (Irreligion idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if... my race and culture is ascendant and recognized as superior." (Racial/cultural idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if... a particular social grouping or professional grouping or other group lets me in." (Inner ring idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if... my children and/or parents are happy and happy with me." (Family idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if... Mr or Ms Right is in love with me." (Relationship idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if... I am hurting/in a problem; only then am I worthy of love or able to deal with guilt." (Suffering idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if... my political or social cause is making progress and ascending in influence or power." (Ideology idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if... I have a particular kind of look or body image." (Image idolatry)

God, Gospel & Life: Idolatry

Note: This fall we will continue our study of the Gospel and how it changes everything, starting in our life, extending into our community, for the benefit of the city and world. This study will include some direct quotes, adapted lessons and indirect organizational queues from a number of resources, including *Total Church* (Steve Timmis and Tim Chester), *Tangible Kingdom* (Hugh Halter and Matt Smay) and *Gospel in Life* (Tim Keller). Our objective is to gain a greater understanding of who God is, what He has done, who we are and what we are now sent by Him to do in this city. My prayer is that we grow more deeply in love with our God, who first loved us, and those of our great city.

Scripture.

Read Romans 1:18–25.

Discussion.

What is the reason that our minds and hearts become “futile” and “darkened”? (see especially v. 21a)

According to these verses, what are some of the results of idolatry in our lives? Has this been true in your own experience? What are some examples?

What do these verses tell us about the wrath of God?

John Calvin describes us as a “perpetual factory of idols.”⁴² What are some examples of personal idols?

Whatever controls us is our lord. The person who seeks power is controlled by power. The person who seeks acceptance is controlled by the people he or she wants to please. We do not control ourselves. We are controlled by the lord of our life. (Rebecca Pippert, *Out of the Saltshaker and into the World* as quoted by Tim Keller in *Gospel in Life*)

If “idolatry” is the characteristic and summary Old Testament word for our drift from God, then “desires” (epithumiai) is the characteristic and summary NT word for the same drift. Both are shorthand for the problem of human beings...[T]he NT merges the concept of idolatry and the concept of inordinate, life-ruling desires. Idolatry becomes a problem of the heart, a metaphor for human lust, craving, yearning and greedy demand. (David Powlison, “Idols of the Heart and ‘Vanity Fair’” as quoted by Tim Keller in *Gospel in Life*)

⁴² John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Battles Edition, Book 1, Chapter XI, Section 8

Word.

Read Rom. 1:18-25; Jer. 2:25; Ps. 106:36; Ez. 6:9.

Notes.

Idolatry in the **OT**. Law (Ex. 20:3). Psalms (Ps. 24:3-4). Prophets (Isa. 2:8; Jer. 1:16).

Idolatry in the **NT**. (Rom. 1:18-25; Gal. 4:8-9; 1 John 5:21)

Identify your idols. (consider chart from last week)

- What is your greatest nightmare? What do you worry about the most?
- What do you rely on or comfort yourself with when things go badly or become difficult?

If you seek...	Your greatest nightmare	People around you often feel	Your problem emotion
POWER (success, winning, influence)	Humiliation	Used	Anger
APPROVAL (affirmation, love, relationships)	Rejection	Smothered	Cowardice
COMFORT (privacy, lack of stress, freedom)	Stress, demands	Neglected	Boredom
CONTROL (self-discipline, certainty, standards)	Uncertainty	Condemned	Worry

Displacing your idols.

- Moralizing approach: “Your problem is that you are doing wrong. Repent!”
- Psychologizing approach: “Your problem is that you don’t see that God loves you as you are. Rejoice!”
- Gospel approach: “Your problem is that you are looking to something beside Christ for happiness. You have been worshiping an idol and rejecting the true God. Repent and rejoice!”

Pray. Name + Repent + Rejoice.

Thomas Chalmers says, in his sermon, “The Expulsive Power of a New Affection”, “The heart is so constituted that the only way to dispossess it of an old affection is by the expulsive power of a new one.” When and how have you found this to be true in your experience?

Archbishop William Temple said, “Your religion is what you do with your solitude.” When you are alone what do you tend to think about most? Where do your thoughts go naturally, instinctively, habitually? How does this help identify your idols?

The Reformer Martin Luther says that “under every behavioral sin is the sin of idolatry, and under every act of idolatry is a disbelief in the gospel.” Do you agree? Why or why not? What are the implications for how we really change our hearts and lives?

“We become what we worship.” (GK Beale) Do we? In what way and why?

What are some of the concrete ways we can make Jesus the King and Lord of our entire lives?

Additional resources.

Counterfeit Gods, Tim Keller

We Become What We Worship, GK Beale

God, Gospel & Life: Work

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Scripture.

Read Genesis 1-2.

Discussion.

In what ways does God revel in his creation? How should that make us feel about creation and ourselves?

What jobs does God mention for Adam and Eve? (Gen. 1:26f)

We see rhythms of work and rest built into creation, how and why should this apply to our lives?

After the fall (Gen. 3), mankind turned from God, wanting to be god. What problems resulted?

Word.

Our worldview and our work.

One of the problems created was that of divergent worldviews (i.e. how a person views the world). Everyone has a worldview, a story upon which their lives are built (even if not consciously done so). This story answers three primary questions:

- What is the **purpose** of life? What is the point, meaning, goal of life?
- What is the **problem** with human nature? Why are things as they are?
- What is the **solution**? How do we fix, resolve, deal with it?

The primary worldviews tend to break down as follows:

	Traditional Religion	Naturalism (scientific naturalism, modern psychology)	Anti-Realism (existentialism, postmodernism)	Christian Gospel
Purpose	Moral goodness	Survival	Freedom	Knowing God
Problem	Moral failure	Lack of adaptability	Oppression	Sin
Solution	Self (effort)	Self (knowledge)	Self (liberation)	Christ & His grace

The new community by the Bible cuts across all cultures and worldviews. It doesn't fit any worldview but challenges them all at some point. When the gospel enters a culture or worldview, it therefore challenges and affirms aspects of it; retains and rejects. When it enters any culture, it resolves and completes its partly-true story through the gospel.⁴³

Q: Take one of the above. How is that worldview partly true?

Q: How does the gospel cleanse and resolve the story of that worldview?

Q: How does our worldview effect how we work?

The Gospel changes our work.

- The Bible is a single story with teaching sprinkled in.
- God has a plan for your life, your neighborhood and our city.
- His plan is to establish His kingdom for His glory and our good; starting with His life, death and resurrection.
- The gospel is the means by which the kingdom of God advances.
- The gospel should therefore influence everything we do, including **work**.

The gospel of Jesus points us and indeed urges us to be at the leading edge of the whole culture, articulating in story and music and art and philosophy and education and poetry and politics and theology...a worldview that will mount the historically rooted Christian challenge to both modernity and postmodernity, leading the way into the post-postmodern world with joy and humor and gentleness and good judgment and true wisdom. I believe we face the question: if not now, then when? And if we are grasped by this vision, we may also hear the question: if not us, then who? And if the gospel of Jesus is not the key to this task, then what is? ⁴⁴

⁴³ *Gospel in Life*, Keller, p96

⁴⁴ NT Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus* (Downer's Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1999), p196 as quoted by Tim Keller in *Gospel in Life*, p98

Four ways the gospel changes how we work...

1. The gospel changes...

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. (Colossians 3:23-24)

2. The gospel changes...

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

3. The gospel changes...

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

4. The gospel changes...

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. (Genesis 2:15)

Discussion.

Q: What are some of the practical implications of the biblical teachings that work is good and has dignity?

Q: What are some of the practical implications of the biblical teachings that we must not separate God from our work?

Q: Besides telling coworkers about Christ, what does it mean to “bring the gospel into your work”? What are some ways you can work with Christian distinctiveness in your workplace?

Q: How can the deep rest Jesus gives us in the gospel change our relationship to our work?

Q: In what ways can the gospel shape you and your profession that is uniquely helpful?

Homework.

Read “Social Involvement”, *Total Church*, Chester & Timmis

The Gospel and our neighbor.

There are two powerful effects that the gospel of grace has on a person who has been touched by it. First, the person who knows that he received mercy while an undeserving enemy of God will have a heart of love for even (and especially!) the most ungrateful and difficult persons. When a Christian sees prostitutes, alcoholics, prisoners, drug addicts, unwed mothers, the homeless, the refugees, he knows that he is looking in a mirror. Perhaps the Christian spent all of his life as a respectable middle-class person. No matter. He thinks: “Spiritually I was just like these people, though physically and socially I never was where they are now. They are outcasts. I was an outcast. (Tim Keller, *Ministries of Mercy*, p60)

To give largely and liberally, not grudging at all, requires a new heart. (Robert Murray M'Cheyne)

The following chart outlines how true Christianity (i.e. Gospel Christianity) differs from moralistic and socialistic religions (often confused for Christianity!). Take some time to review the chart and note the differences between each belief set. What stands out?

	Moralistic Religion	Socialistic Religion	Gospel Christianity (i.e. “true Christianity”)
Heart Language	“I worked hard to get where I am, and so can anyone else!”	“How selfish you are to eat steak, have three TVs, and drive two cars while the rest of the world is starving!”	“I am only where I am by the sheer and unmerited mercy of God. I am completely equal with all other people.”
Motivation	Self-justification	Guilt	Gospel
“Gospel” The good news of the gospel is...	God will give me favor if I do good.	God sends us into the world to do good and serve others.	God has forgiven my sin and given me infinite favor through Jesus Christ, therefore I am free to serve as I've been served.
View of self	Moral, righteous, respectable	Basically good, respectable	Forgiven, redeemed, loved
View of others in need	Self-righteous, contempt	View as projects in need of training, resources and opportunity	Spiritually equal with all

Now, take some time to read and process the following sections of scripture.

Read Isaiah 58:3-10.

- What is the problem with the people's behavior? (v. 3-6)
- In context, what does it mean to "loose the chains of injustice"?
- What is the result of doing this justice? (v. 8-10)

Read Luke 6:32-36.

- Where do we get the perspective and power to live like this?

Read Matthew 18:21-35.

- What does this say about how we are to forgive others? What is the extent of that forgiveness?
- Where do we get the perspective and power to live like this?

Read Luke 10:25-37.

- Why did the Samaritan stop? (hint v. 33)
- What does it mean for us to go and do likewise? (v. 37)
- Where do we get the perspective and power to live like this?

Read James 2:1-17.

- Do you think the issues described in verses 1-7 is happening in your life or Downtown Cornerstone?
- What does James mean by verse 10? What impact does he want to have on his readers? How does he intend for them to change their lives as a result?
- What is the connection between verses 12-13 and verses 14-17?
- What do we learn here about God's concern for the poor and what are the implications for us?
- Therefore, how is the idea of serving only the "deserving" poor anti-gospel?

On this exact issue, Jonathan Edwards writes the following on Christian charity:

If they are come [into poverty] by a vicious idleness and prodigality [laziness and self-indulgence]; yet we are not thereby excused from all obligation to relieve them, unless they continue in those vices...If we do otherwise, we shall act in a manner very contrary to the rule of loving one another as Christ loved us. Now Christ hath loved us, pitied us, and greatly laid out himself to relieve us from that want and misery which we brought on ourselves by our own folly and wickedness. We foolishly and perversely threw away those riches with which we were provided, upon which we might have lived and been happy to all eternity.

Given the above, what is the scriptural motivation for mercy?

What things prevent you from being more merciful?

If we fail/resist/refuse to forgive/serve/extend mercy, what does that say about our understanding of ourselves, what we've been saved from, and God's work on our behalf (i.e. our understanding of the gospel)?

Practical Application.

What practical needs are present among your neighbors, neighborhood or city. Take some time to talk to others, make some calls and/or do some research. We often assume we know the needs of those around us, but we may be making incorrect assumptions.

- What needs are being addressed by other organizations, ministries and/or government?
- What needs are not being met?

The following are some potential service possibilities:

- Ministries that serve the homeless through, for example: meals, food pantries, clothing closets, shelter, medical services, counseling, or job training.
- Ministries that address the special needs of the unemployed, at-risk youth, immigrants, and those without social or family support.
- Ministries that work with youth, adults, and families whose lives have been affected by drug addiction and other serious life-controlling problems.
- Ministries that focus on community issues, such as: affordable housing, employment, education, economic development, and health care.
- Ministries that offer education, mentoring, and recreation programs for youth.
- Ministries that give support at special times of the year by providing gifts and food.

God, Gospel & Life: Mercy & Justice

Note: This fall we will continue our study of the Gospel and how it changes everything, starting in our life, extending into our community, for the benefit of the city and world. This study will include some direct quotes, adapted lessons and indirect organizational queues from a number of resources, including *Total Church* (Steve Timmis and Tim Chester), *Tangible Kingdom* (Hugh Halter and Matt Smay) and *Gospel in Life* (Tim Keller). Our objective is to gain a greater understanding of who God is, what He has done, who we are and what we are now sent by Him to do in this city. My prayer is that we grow more deeply in love with our God, who first loved us, and those of our great city.

Scripture.

Read Luke 10:25-37.

Discussion.

Given Jesus' teaching, who is our neighbor?

Should we help members of our own family and of our own Christian community first?

How does Jesus illustrate what the true motive should be for showing mercy to our neighbor?

In seeing how the Christians reacted to plagues within the Roman empire differently than those of other faiths, the Roman Emperor Julian (around 360AD) noted...

The impious Galileans [Christians] support not only their poor, but ours as well, everyone can see that our people lack aid from us.⁴⁵

Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria (around 260AD), noted the same...

[During the great epidemic] most of our brother Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves...Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ...Many, in nursing and curing others, transferred their death to themselves and died in their stead...The [pagans] behaved in the very opposite way. At the first onset of the disease, they pushed the sufferers away and fled every from their dearest, throwing them into the roads before they were dead.⁴⁶

What is the effect of unselfish service on others? Have you found this to be true in your own life?

⁴⁵ Quoted in Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (San Francisco: Harper, 1997), p84.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p82-83

Word.

The Hebrew word “shalom” is typically translated “peace”. However, we typically define peace as the cessation of hostility. *Shalom*, far richer in meaning, is universal flourishing in every direction and dimension.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself... (Leviticus 19:18)

You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another...you shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired servant shall not remain with you all night until the morning...you shall do no injustice in court... (Leviticus 19:11,13,15)

What God is saying in Leviticus is simple. Justice is love in action. To love our neighbor is to treat them justly. Jesus’ words in Luke 10 tell us that our neighbor is *anybody in need*.

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? (Isaiah 58:6)

God speaks these words through Isaiah to a nation that was going through the religious motions without a true heart for God and others. This is a call to seek the flourishing of those around us, whether seeking changes in social structures, advocating against domestic violence or meeting the concrete needs of those God has providentially placed around you.

Read Matthew 25:31-46.

Whoever despises his neighbor is a sinner, but blessed is he who is generous to the poor. (Proverbs 14:21)

Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed. (Proverbs 19:17)

In sum, a strong social conscience and a life poured out in service to others is the inevitable sign of a real relationship with God. We may believe that we have a good relationship with the Lord, but these texts are saying that it may not be as good as we think it is.

*If we end here, all we have is moralism and religion.
But, we have the gospel.*

The Bible tells us that we are spiritually poor. By nature and choice we pursue the path of spiritual poverty, which is sin. In our spiritual homelessness, hunger, thirst and devastation, God became man in Jesus Christ. He was born in a feeding trough. Lived, ate and associated with the lowest classes of society. Spent the better part of his life homeless. Rode into town on a borrowed donkey. Ate his last supper in a borrowed room. Died in a borrowed tomb. Not only was he poor, he was a victim of injustice. He not only suffered for us, but with us. Jesus was made naked on our behalf, imprisoned on our behalf, he hungered and thirsted on our behalf, treated unjustly on our behalf, ultimately died on our behalf. **He became poor, to make us rich in Him. He was treated unjustly, that we might be justified by Him. He was imprisoned, that we may be set free to Him.**

How could we not be radically compelled to lives of sacrifice, service, mercy and justice?

It is never enough to address people's felt needs. Felt needs can be a good point to start because the gospel addresses the human condition in all its complexity. *But people do not as a rule express God's judgment as a felt need.* People are blind to their true plight. They do not see their greatest need, which is to be reconciled to God through the gospel. If we do not keep people's eternal plight in mind, then immediate needs will force their way to the top of our agenda, and we will betray the gospel and the people we profess to love. The most loving thing we can do for the poor is to proclaim the good news of eternal salvation through Christ. (Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, *Total Church*, p78)

Three guiding principles.

- I. Evangelism and social action are distinct activities.
- II. Proclamation is central.
- III. Evangelism and social action are inseparable.

Loving the city through mercy and justice is another way by which we will build a great city through the gospel for the glory of God.

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

Discussion.

Q: What struck?

Q: In what practical ways can you/we resolve to have *shalom* felt everywhere and begin to reweave the broken fabric of creation? What can you/we bring into our neighborhoods and city that is uniquely helpful?

Benjamin Fernando from Sri Lanka writes,

There is no such thing as a separate individual gospel and a separate social gospel. There is only one gospel - a redeemed man in a reformed society...Social problems assume greater importance in Christianity than in Buddhism or Hinduism. The theory of Karma and rebirth gives a fairly reasonable explanation for social inequalities of this life which on the one hand are consequences of the previous life and on the other hand can be compensated for in the next life. But to a Christian there is only one earthly life and so social problems have to be dealt with now or never.⁴⁷

Q: Do you agree with his assessment that "social problems have to be dealt with now or never"?

⁴⁷ Benjamin E. Fernando, "The Evangel and Social Upheaval (part 2)", in *Christ Seeks Asia*, ed. W.S. Mooneyham (Charlestown, Ind.: Rock House, 1969), p118-119 as quoted by Tim Keller in *Gospel in Life*, p121

Q: The Bible reveals at least three causal factors for poverty: injustice and oppression; circumstantial calamity; and personal failure. Do you agree? Can you give examples of these from the Bible or your own experience?

Q: What would it mean for you, specifically, to help people who are not like you, who do not like you, and who you do not like?

Jonathan Edwards once was preaching on how important it was to give to the poor. Someone later objected, "I can't afford to give to the poor." Edwards responded with an application from Gal. 6:2.

In many cases, we may, by the rules of the gospel, be obliged to give to others, when we cannot do it without suffering ourselves...If our neighbor's difficulties and necessities be much greater than our own, and we see that he is not like to be otherwise relieved, we should be willing to suffer with him, and to take part of his burden on ourselves; else how is that rule of bearing one another's burdens fulfilled? If we are never obliged to relieve others' burdens, but when we can do it without burdening ourselves, then how do we bear our neighbor's burdens, when we bear no burden at all? ⁴⁸

Q: Do you agree that we are not only to help others with our excess time, money and emotional resources, but that we are to give until it burdens us? What does this mean for you and DCC?

Homework.

Read "Spirituality", "Theology", and "Success", *Total Church*, Chester & Timmis

- Read the three specified chapters from *Total Church*.
- Listen to "The Church and the City", Adam Sinnett.*

*Please see **Appendix A** for this sermon.

On the world that is.

Q: In regard to assimilating, reflecting, despising, ignoring or loving the City - which attitude do people you know generally take? Why?

⁴⁸ Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1834), Volume 2, p171

Q: How can you/we stand out from the prevailing culture in the way we understand money, relationships, sex, and human life?

Perhaps the best analogy to describe all this is that of a model home...On a tract of earth's land purchased with the blood of Christ, Jesus the kingdom developer has begun building new housing. As a sample of what will be, he has erected a model home of what will eventually fill the urban neighborhood. Now he invites the...world into that model home to take a look at what will be. The church is the occupant of that model home, inviting neighbors into its open door to Christ. Evangelism is when the signs are put up saying, "Come in and look around" ... In this model home we live out our new lifestyle as citizens of the heavenly city that one day will come. We do not abandon our jobs or desert the city that is..We are... to 'seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which' god carried us in exile. (Jeremiah 19:7)

Q: Are we increasingly becoming a model home as described above?

Q: What can we do to make this increasingly the case?

On the world to come.

On the world to come John Calvin writes,

Christ, the Sun of Righteousness [Mal. 4:2], shining through the gospel and having overcome death, has, as Paul testifies, brought us the light of life [2 Tim 1:10]. Hence we likewise by believing "pass out of death into life" [John 5:24], being "no more strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens of the saints and of the household of God" [Eph. 2:19], who "made us sit" with his only-begotten Son "in the heavenly places" [Eph. 2:6], that we may lack nothing for full happiness...Paul says in another passage that "we have died, and our life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, appears, then we also will appear with him in glory" [Col 3:3-4]⁴⁹ ... Let us always have in mind the eternal happiness, the goal of resurrection - a happiness of whose excellence the minutest part would scarce be told if all were said that the tongues of all men can say. For though we very truly hear that the Kingdom of God will be filled with splendor, joy, happiness, and glory, yet when these things are spoken of, they remain utterly remote from our perceptions, and, as it were, wrapped in obscurities, until that day comes when he will reveal to us his glory, that we may behold it face to face [cf 1 Cor. 13:12].⁵⁰

⁴⁹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Battles Edition, Book 3, Chapter XXV, Section 1 (Louisville: Westminster Press, 1960), p987-988

⁵⁰ Ibid., Section 10, p1004-1005

On the world to come Martin Luther writes,

God will create a new heaven and a new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell. It will be no arid waste, but a beautiful new earth, where all the just will dwell together. There will be no carnivorous beasts, or venomous creatures, for all such, like ourselves, will be relieved from the curse of sin...The foliage of the trees, and the verdure of the grass, will have the brilliancy of emeralds; and we ourselves delivered from our mundane subjection to gross appetites and necessities, shall have the same form as here, but infinitely more perfect. Our eyes will be radiant as the purest silver, and we shall be exempt from all sickness and tribulation. We shall behold the glorious Creator face to face.⁵¹

On the world to come Jonathan Edwards said,

The most stately cities on earth, however magnificent their buildings, yet have their foundations in the dust, and their streets dirty and defiled, and made to be trodden under foot; but the very streets of this heavenly city are of pure gold, like untold transparent glass, and its foundations are of precious stones, and its gates are pearls...There are many principles contrary to love, that make this world like a tempestuous sea. Selfishness, and envy, and revenge, and jealousy, and kindred passions keep life on earth in a constant tumult...But oh! what rest is there in that world which the God of peace and love fills with his own gracious presence, and in which the Lamb of God lives and reigns, filling it with the brightest and sweetest beams of his love; where there is nothing to disturb or offend, and no being or object to be seen that is not surrounded with perfect amiableness and sweetness....where there is no enemy and no enmity; but perfect love in every heart and to every being; where there is perfect harmony among all the inhabitants, no one envying another, but everyone rejoicing in the happiness of every other....where love is always mutual and reciprocated to the full; where there is no hypocrisy or dissembling, but perfect simplicity and sincerity; where there is no treachery, of unfaithfulness, or inconstancy, or jealousy in any form...where there is no division through different opinions of interests, but where all in that glorious and loving society shall be most nearly and divinely related, and each shall belong to every other, and all shall enjoy each other in perfect prosperity and riches, and honor without any sickness, or grief, or persecution, or sorrow, or any enemy to molest them, or any busybody to create jealousy or misunderstanding, or mar the perfect, and holy and blessed peace the reigns in heaven!⁵²

Q: What are the differences and similarities between the three descriptions of the world to come?

Q: What specific phrases or concepts were striking or helpful to you? Why?

⁵¹ Martin Luther, *The Table Talk of Martin Luther*, translated by William Hazlitt (Longdon: Bell & Daldry, 1872), p322-323

⁵² From Jonathan Edwards' sermon "Heaven, a World of Love", source: <http://www.biblebb.com/files/edwards/charity16.htm>

The World to Come Now, in Part.

Take some time to prayerfully answer the following questions. Take some time to answer each question and discuss with someone else. Invite them to add anything you may have missed. I recommend doing this type of exercise on (at least) an annual basis for your encouragement, growth and continued transformation. There are three sections: Gospel and the Heart, Gospel and Community, and Gospel and the World.⁵³

GOSPEL & THE HEART.

1. Do you know God, rely on God, seek God, and praise God genuinely? What practical steps can you take to make this more the case?
2. What does Christ mean in your life on a daily basis? In what areas of your life is Christ having a significant impact? In what areas should he be having a greater impact?
3. Are you confident that you are righteous in God's sight? What things tend to make you forget or question this? What things do you rely on other than Christ? What steps can you take to change?
4. What idols are you struggling with? How are you dealing with pride, fear of man, attachment to money, sexual lust, preoccupation with your own performance, and the like?
5. Do you admit your limits, mistakes, sins and weaknesses to God, others, yourself?

To God:	never	seldom	occasionally	frequently	always
To others:	never	seldom	occasionally	frequently	always
To yourself:	never	seldom	occasionally	frequently	always
6. How have you changed over the past year?
 - Are you a more loving person?
 - Are you a more joyful person? Do you give thanks more?
 - Are you a more peaceful person? Do you worry less?
 - Are you more patient? With people? With circumstances?
 - Are you a kinder person?
 - Can you take criticism better?
 - Are you bolder, more courageous, and more confident in following Christ?
 - Are you a less angry, more gentle person?
 - Are you a more self-controlled person? In what areas? Where do you still need change?

⁵³ Adapted from Tim Keller, *Gospel in Life*, p134-139

GOSPEL & COMMUNITY.

7. Are you developing relationships within your church family? Is there a group of Christians with whom you share life, with whom you are transparent, and who feel like family?
8. Are you accountable to a Christian community? Are there areas of your life that you feel you need more accountability? What are they?
9. Do you serve willingly and joyfully? Do you serve yourself or others primarily? Are you doing things out of selfish ambition, or do you put the interests of others first?
10. Are your life and behavior disciplined, consistent and winsome? Would people want to imitate what they see of your faith, your faithfulness, and your character?
11. Is sharing the gospel a regular part of your life? Are you active in telling others about Christ?
12. How have you changed over the past year?
 - Do you regularly love and encourage others, even when under stress or undergoing suffering?
 - Are you more able to love people you do not necessarily like?
 - Do you regularly communicate love and affection toward others in a visible way?
 - Do you regularly offer hospitality to those around you?
 - Are you more able to unselfishly help others with their needs and problems?
 - Are you better able to challenge and confront others but to do so with love and humility?
 - Are you regularly helping others to grow and mature in their faith?
 - Are you a more forgiving person than you were last year?
 - Are you more involved with the needs of others?
13. In what ways could you do more?
14. How frequently do you take part in the following? Are these a regular part of your life? How can they become a more regular part?
 - Individual prayer.
 - Group prayer (family, community, church, serving)
 - Personal Bible reading.
 - Group Bible Reading.

GOSPEL & THE WORLD.

15. How often do you give your time to ministries of justice or mercy? In what ways are you involved in the lives of the poor, the marginalized and the suffering? What motivates you to do this?
16. In what ways do you give of your time, energy and resources? Do you give significantly, substantially, sacrificially and willingly? Could you do more?
17. What do you do to practice Sabbath rest? Are you taking time to rest or are you too consumed by your work?
18. How do you honor Christ in your work or daily tasks? In what ways do you see your work as a restoration or shalom?
19. How often do you pray for the city? Do you seek its “peace and prosperity”? In what ways do you use the place where you live? In what ways do you love and serve the place where you live?
20. Is there a role or area of service you should take on/continue/stop?
21. Of the three categories “heart”, “community”, “world”, is there an area you resonate with and want to learn more about?

God, Gospel & Life: The World to Come (Now)

Note: This fall we will continue our study of the Gospel and how it changes everything, starting in our life, extending into our community, for the benefit of the city and world. This study will include some direct quotes, adapted lessons and indirect organizational queues from a number of resources, including *Total Church* (Steve Timmis and Tim Chester), *Tangible Kingdom* (Hugh Halter and Matt Smay) and *Gospel in Life* (Tim Keller). Our objective is to gain a greater understanding of who God is, what He has done, who we are and what we are now sent by Him to do in this city. My prayer is that we grow more deeply in love with our God, who first loved us, and those of our great city.

Scripture.

God begins history in a garden but He ends it in a city, New Jerusalem. In the middle of that city is something we haven't seen since the beginning in the Garden of Eden, the Tree of Life. What is it doing there? Let's look at this more closely.

Read Isaiah 60:15-22.

Q: What will heaven be like according to Isaiah's description in verses 17-21?

Read Revelation 21:1-4, 22-27.

Q: How does this compare with the description in Revelation?

Q: How can the knowledge that there will be no violence or destruction in the future kingdom help us, and those we come into contact with, to cope with the violence and destruction we experience around us?

Q: God is described in a variety of ways and given a variety of titles in this passage (Isa 60). What do we learn about God and what does it mean for our relationship with him?

My own hunch is that God has provided us with a rich storehouse of diverse images of the afterlife, all of them hints in the direction of something that is beyond our present comprehension, so that we can be free to draw on one or another of them as a particular situation in our life may require.⁵⁴

Q: In what situations might we draw on the description of heaven in Isaiah 60? What other descriptions of eternity have you drawn on in the past and why?

⁵⁴ Richard J. Mouw, *When the Kings Come Marching In* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002)

Word.

Isaiah 60 casts a beautiful vision of the world that is come. Let's look at three aspects of this vision.

1. Vision of _____ (Isa. 60:11, 9,13)
2. Vision of _____ (Isa. 60:18)
3. Vision of _____ (Isa. 19-20)

“Everything that has happened in history is only the cover and the title page.” (C.S. Lewis)

Discussion.

Q: What struck?

Q: Isaiah 60 describes a vision of the New Jerusalem as incorporating the cultural achievements of all people and all nations. What aspects of your work do you think might be incorporated into this final kingdom? How does this affect your understanding of work?

Q: The community described here is one of perfectly restored *shalom*. What are some tangible ways that the church can be a better foretaste of that community?

Q: What are some things that are competing with God as your “glory” and your “everlasting light”? What do you think would change if God were your only glory and everlasting light?

Q: Now that we have completed this study, what is one thing that changed or affected you? Why?

Loving the City to Life: Part I

Launch Criteria.

In order to discern a Spirit-led timing of when to begin public gatherings, we put together a list of missional and ministry health indicators. Meeting these indicators means that we are missionally and practically on track to go public with a healthy missional church. We may have to revise and come back to these several times.⁵⁵

Missional Health.

Everyone has:

- Signed a Launch Commitment
- Demonstrated service and giving commitment
- Evidence of intentional engagement with non-Christians
- Evidence of heart and hands for the social needs of Seattle
- Everybody on Launch Team is in a Cornerstone Community
- Cornerstone Communities are meeting and healthy, with a growing sense of unity around the mission

Ministry Structures.

Children's Ministry.

- Clear leadership and delegation for children's ministry
- Trained volunteers
- Teacher and Curriculum clarity
- Security/Background check in place
- Systems are working smoothly
- Cornerstone Kids Leads are content with how things are functioning

Worship Ministry.

- Clear leadership and delegation for gathered worship
- Efficient setup/teardown process
- Seamless transitions (i.e. production, sound, lights, etc)
- Sense of expectancy and passion
- Music lead in place, content with band formation and service style

Community Ministry.

- Clear leadership and training of CC leaders & leaders-in-training
- Defined process for discussion question development and distribution
- Cornerstone Communities identify a local missional venture
- Curriculum Map for 2011

Hospitality Ministry.

- Solid leadership in Hospitality team and delegation
- Ethos of hospitality established
- Create and provide welcoming atmosphere
- Launch Team is hospitable

⁵⁵ Adapted from Austin City Life Launch Criteria

Evangelism.

Scripture.

Read Isaiah 40:9-3.

- God is great so we don't have to be in control.⁵⁶
- God is glorious so we don't have to fear others.
- God is good so we don't have to look elsewhere.
- God is gracious so we don't have to prove ourselves.
- Herald of good news!
- Lift up your voice!
- Fear not!
- Behold your God!

A few ways of evangelism in Scripture.

- **Invitation:** Come and See – John 4
- **Hospitality:** Hebrews 13:1, 2
- **Proclamation:** Apostolic preaching in Acts – Peter in chapters 2 and 3, Stephen in Acts 7, Paul in Acts
- **Conversational:** Phillip and the Eunuch in Acts 8:26-40, Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10, Paul describes house-to-house teaching in Acts 20
- **Body/Worship:** 1 Corinthians 14:23-25
- **Answering the Interested:** Colossians 4:5, 6; 1 Peter 3:15

Living with gospel intentionality (aka “Evangelistic Networking”).

Living with gospel intentionality (or evangelistic networking) is a philosophy of ministry based on friendship evangelism.

Most programs rely on the reception of the gospel from a stranger. Either the crusade evangelist, or the trained “visitor,” or some other stranger must give the gospel to the nonbeliever. As our modern society becomes more privatized, as neighborhoods disappear and people “cocoon,” the likelihood that people will listen to a stranger diminishes. (Keller, *CPM*, p123)

A networking church is developed primarily through cultivating a mindset, a collective attitude, of intentionally creating relationships for the purpose of the gospel - and only secondarily through setting up programs. (Keller, *CPM*, p124)

Particularly in an urban, individualistic, secularized society we will find more and more that:

- People will not listen to the gospel from strangers.
- People will not be assimilated well through strangers who follow-up by coming to their doors.
- People will have to come a number of times to a program or service before even giving us their name.

This is very true in Seattle. Therefore, every ministry activity of Downtown Cornerstone Church will be a friendship evangelism event (worship, community, life, etc). Everything we do will be pushed through this grid.

⁵⁶ Tim Chester, *You Can Change*, p88

The problem.

The primary problem in evangelism is that new believers have the connections and credibility with nonbelievers but do not have the power to articulate the gospel. On the other hand, mature believers have the power to articulate but not the place in the worldly grapevines. (Keller, 124) So we must continually think through ways of connecting mature Christians with new Christians, while equipping both.

Potential networking pathways.

In urban contexts 'vocational' and 'relational' pathways are more important than 'family' and 'geography' pathways.

Geographically based evening small groups are better for winning familial and geographical networks. But workday breakfast and lunch events in business districts are better for the latter two. (Keller, *CPM*, p125-126)

We need to be around people who do not know Jesus. We need to think in terms of the natural relational networks we already have in life. (e.g. where you live, work, play, hang, etc)

Pathway #1. Natural relationships with neighbors, coworkers, friends and family.

Pathway #2. Sunday service pathway. (Sunday > community)

Pathway #3. Cornerstone Community pathway. (Community > Sunday)

Pathway #4. Business-network events. (MP3 > Business event > Sunday > Community)

Pathway #5. Felt needs and/or justice/mercy pathways.

Pathway #6. Large group special events.

Pathway #7. Alliances with other evangelistic ministries.

Networking Evangelism is a Process.

Conversion is a one-time event.

The process may follow a pattern such as this:

Awareness. "This is it" Clearing the ground of stereotypes. Distinguishing the gospel from legalism or liberalism, distinguishing core from peripheral.

Relevance. "I need it." Showing the slavery of both religion and irreligion. Showing the transforming power, how the gospel "works".

Credibility. "I need it because it is true." Reversing the modern view which says, "It is true if I need it." Must see the reasonableness or there will be no endurance to their faith decision.

Trial. "I see what it would be like." In group life, in service ministries, they try Christianity on, often talking like Christians or defending it.

Commitment. "I take it." Sometimes this is the point of real conversion. This may have happened in the past or it may happen later on.

Reinforcement. "Now I get it." Typically, a period of follow-up is the place where the penny drops and the gospel becomes clear.

Identify where people are on their spiritual journey.

Questions to consider asking:

- Where are you on your spiritual journey?
- Where would you like to be on your spiritual journey in six months to a year?
- What is standing between you and that point?
- What will it take for you to remove those barriers?

Examples:

- Not interested
- Curiously seeking
- Assertively seeking
- Faith commitment
- Actively following
- Growing in fellowship
- Making an impact

Q: How should we share the gospel?

- Accept that living on mission with Jesus is part of your Christian calling, not to mention God's good and loving will for you. You may not have the gift of evangelism, but it is still your calling.
- Pray for opportunities and people – and keep your eyes open.
- Take little initiatives (greet others, remember names, etc). Look for opportunities.
- Plan for the unexpected.
- Risk. Be willing to ask the first question, share a story, give a gift.
- Prepare. (talk to others, read books, ask questions, etc)
- Love others as you have been loved by Jesus.
- "Converse the faith". Be honest, open and sincere. Ask questions! Listen.
- Let the Scriptures speak. (Rom. 10:17)
- Be clear and faithful in presenting the whole gospel.
- Maintain a balance of honesty, urgency and joy:
 - Honesty + urgency – joy = grim determination
 - Honesty + joy – urgency = carelessness about time
 - Urgency + joy – honesty = distorted view of the gospel
- Practice in community. Use the church (but don't abdicate to the church).

Take note: Who are you talking to?

Know who you're talking to, "good" and "bad" people:

- "Bad" people know they are sinners in need of saving grace, but don't think God will forgive them.
- "Good" people don't know they are sinners and think God will forgive them based on their "goodness".
- "Bad" people need to see that God offers grace to sinners.
- "Good" people need to see that they're sinners in need of God's grace.
- "Bad" people live out their "badness" with "bad" actions.
- "Good" people have learned to cover their "badness" with "goodness".

We need to lead "good" people to see they're no different than "bad" people. We're all sinners.

['Good' people] are often irritable and impatient perfectionists; control freaks who judge harshly and hastily, blaming and accusing others when things go wrong. They would never let themselves be consumed by drink, but they could be consumed by their own accomplishments. All these things are rooted in deep pride. (John Miller, *A Faith Worth Sharing*, p55)

Loving the City to Life: Part II

Scripture.

Read Psalm 23.

- God is our Shepherd (leads, protects, provides, corrects, present and attentive)
- God gives us rest and restoration
- God leads us to true life
- God is with us in the valley (amidst darkness, enemies and difficulty)
- God protects us from evil, amidst evil
- God gives us all we need
- God will never leave us, etc.

What happens when the Shepherd is removed?

¹~~The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.~~

²~~He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside still waters,~~

³~~he restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.~~

⁴~~Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.~~

⁵~~You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.~~

⁶~~Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.~~⁵⁷

When the Shepherd is removed we are left paralyzed with our wants and fears in the “valley of the shadow of death”...in the presence of our enemies. Everyone walks through the valley; the question is, What are the eyes of your heart set on? The cynical and despairing focus on the darkness while the childlike trusting focus on the Shepherd. Without a Shepherd, this cynicism and despair will effect everything in our lives.

Jesus is the Shepherd of Our Lives.

It could be easy in this season of church life to get discouraged. We're young, newly forming, with few systems in place. There aren't redemption groups, thriving counseling ministries, and a team of specialized pastors to lean on. But, Jesus is our Shepherd. We have Jesus.

- Is Christ real to you?
- Do you trust him? If not, what are you trusting in?

⁵⁷ Adapted from Paul Miller's, *A Praying Life*

- Do you not only know a lot about him, but do you know him?
- What are you doing to cultivate your trust in Him?
- Are you meeting him regularly in His Word? Do you give him time to speak to you?
- Are you not merely getting in the Word, but is the Word getting in you?
- Are you enjoying prayer? Do you take time to give thanks?
- Are you preaching and applying the gospel to yourself daily?
- What needs to change? How will this year, by God's grace, be different?

Jesus is the Shepherd of Downtown Cornerstone.

Jesus is our Shepherd. He is leading us downtown. He will provide a worship leader. He will provide a long term location in His timing. He will bring the right people at the right time. He will use us for His purposes. He is forming our corporate character in this season. His Word will not return empty. He will use you in His body. He does have a greater purpose for you among His community of redeemed-ones. Our trust isn't in a particular strategy, a particular leader or a particular model - but in a particular Savior. Yes, we want to be wise stewards and planners. Yes, we want to seek out wise counsel. But, above all, Jesus is our Shepherd.

Jesus is the Shepherd of our Communities.

From beginning to end, God's aim is to glorify Himself through a people He is calling out from all tribes of the world and all neighborhoods of Seattle through the gospel. He calls this community of people the church.

Downtown Cornerstone is not just interested in holding events but for people to connect, share life and form communities that are deeply rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ. These are communities of diverse imperfect people that are committed to living out the implications of the gospel in every sphere of life. These are communities of radical grace, sacrificial service, and joy. These are communities that eat together, pray together, laugh together and study the Bible together (i.e. share life). These are communities that build up the church by encouraging people to faith in Jesus Christ and build up the city through deeds of justice and mercy. These are communities where you can be who God created you to be, yourself.

It's our hope and prayer that everyone who calls Downtown Cornerstone home will find such community.

Q: Why community?

God has forever existed in perfect loving relationship within the Trinitarian Godhead (Father, Son, Holy Spirit). This means that Ultimate Reality is a community of Persons who know and love one another. In other words, radical, others-centered, loving community is central to reality. We are created for this type of community, with God and others, because we are created in His image. Yet, our every day experience of this is distorted by sin. Jesus Christ came to restore, renew and redeem all of our relationships, starting with God. We can experience community as it was intended now, in part, by centering our lives on Him.

Q: How can I get connected in community at Downtown Cornerstone?

The best way to meet people and build real friendships at Downtown Cornerstone is to join a Cornerstone Community. To request more information about our communities, email us at info@downtowncornerstone.org.

Q: What should I expect at a Cornerstone Community gathering?

Every community gathers at least once per week, while sharing life throughout the week. These gatherings include the sharing of a meal, prayer, Bible study, and good conversation. Each community looks different because each is made of different people with different interests, schedules and passions. But no matter the specifics, every community at Downtown Cornerstone aims to cultivate a culture marked by the following:

- **Jesus.** We study the Bible, pray for one another and talk about Jesus.
- **Gospel.** We believe in and work out the implications of the gospel in all of life.
- **City.** We look to bless those outside our communities and participate in the life of our city.
- **Church.** We're a diverse group brought together by the gospel for relationship, life and worship.
- **Mission.** We love people and are sent into the city to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- **Renewal.** We volunteer our time, extend compassion, and work for justice for the poor and marginalized.
- **Multiplying.** We seek to multiply Jesus-followers, communities and churches throughout the city/world.

Jesus is the Shepherd of our Finances.

Because Jesus is our Shepherd, our Ultimate Provider, we don't have to rest in the money He has graciously given to us to steward for comfort or security. Everything we have is His, entrusted to us, to be used for Him. Is Jesus the Shepherd of your comfort and security? Does His oversight extend into your bank account, check book and online banking platform? Does your giving reflect a heart whose ultimate treasure is in heaven? Do you confidently trust Him to richly provide all that you need? Are you giving sacrificially, joyfully and regularly (2 Cor. 8:9) as an act of worship and tangible support to this church plant? Our giving is often a chief, though not always, indicator of who we view as our Shepherd. If Jesus is our Shepherd, we shall not lack.

Jesus is the Shepherd of our Evangelism.

Because Jesus is our Shepherd, we can intentionally and courageously engage others in love for the sake of the gospel. We have been radically, perfectly, eternally loved by God in Christ. That empowers us to love, welcome and pursue others as we have been by Him. Evangelism isn't powered by a program, but a loving posture of heart that desires to see as many people as possible in relationship with Jesus forever, starting now. Coming to faith is often a process carried out in relationship with Christians. Thus, it is crucial for us to prayerfully persevere in our relationships with those that don't yet know Him, while trusting Jesus to give us wisdom, words and discernment.

Q: What is evangelism?

Q: Why do we experience such difficulty in sharing the gospel with others?

- "It could cause problems at work."
- "Right now, there other things that are more urgent."
- "I don't know any non-Christians."
- "I don't have the gift of evangelism." (Ephesians 4:11)
- "People don't really want to hear about it." or "They won't be interested."
- "It probably won't work."

Q: What are some false views of the gospel?

- Gospel = God is only love.
- Gospel = Jesus only wants to be our friend.
- Gospel = Being good.

Q: What evangelism isn't?

- Imposition: "Isn't it wrong to impose our beliefs on others?"
- Personal testimony: "This is why I believe..."
- Social Action and Public Involvement: "I show the gospel through my actions..."
- Apologetics
- Results: Don't confuse the message with the fruits of the message.

Types of people we need!

In any given church there are 'comers' (those who simply attend), 'bringers' (those who bring others with them), 'seekers' (those curious about Christianity) and 'leaders'. In a networking church, particularly in a new plant, you must be a 'seeker', a 'bringer' or a 'leader' or you are dead weight. (Keller, *CPM*, p124)

A Christian becomes a "bringer" when two things happen.

1. The internal thinking, "I should invite my friends to this," occurs.
2. The Christian brings a non-Christian or non-churched person who wants to come back.

How do we cultivate an atmosphere of evangelistic networking?

There must be an atmosphere of expectation that every member will always have 2 to 4 people in the incubator, a force-field in which people are being prayed for, given literature, invited into our lives, brought to corporate gatherings or other events.

Downtown Cornerstone will cultivate this by:

- Every leader modeling
- Prayerfulness (specifically aimed at not-yet-believers)
- Providing resources and tools (MP3's, books, training, life-on-life, etc.)
- Creating a variety of events and pathways for this to take place (Sunday, community, on-the-fly, etc.)
- Make it a regular part of the church's "talk".
- Regularly evaluate where we are at. Is everything we do challenging Christians and non-Christians?
- Our communities will be open to neighbors through cookouts, sporting events, movie nights, dinners, social action, civic involvement and church services.

Relational sacrifices.

We need real friendship for the sake of that person over time. We need to serve them, love them and hang out with them with no other agenda but to represent Jesus to them and enjoy opportunities to speak of Him as God leads. This will require a sacrifice of time with your personal schedule. Joyfully embrace this!

Intentionality.

It is easy for us to just hang out with each other, so we need to intentionally associate with those who are not yet part of our community.

Next steps of faith.

Don't make mission another thing that you add to your schedule, make your schedule "missional". This isn't merely another thing to do, but how we do all things. Yet, it will take some intentionality. Who is God calling you to intentionally pursue and build relationships with? Of those you already have relationships with, what would it look like to lovingly and boldly confront them with the gospel? What are your first steps of faith as you step out on mission?

Appendix A: Resources

“The Centrality of the Gospel”, Tim Keller⁵⁸

“The Church and the City”, Pastor Adam Sinnett⁵⁹

Church Planting Movements, David Garrison

Cities of God, Rodney Stark

Counterfeit Gods, Tim Keller

Culture Making, Andy Crouch

ESV Study Bible, Crossway, Good News Publishers

“The Gospel-Centered Life”, Bob Thune & Will Walker⁶⁰

Life Together, Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Living the Cross-Centered Life, CJ Mahaney

Ministries of Mercy, Tim Keller

Prodigal God, Tim Keller

“Talking About Idolatry in a Postmodern Age”, Tim Keller⁶¹

Tangible Kingdom, Hugh Halter & Matt Smay

A Theology as Big as the City, Ray Bakke

Total Church, Tim chester & Steve Timmis

We Become What We Worship, GK Beale

You Can Change, Tim Chester

⁵⁸ www.redeemer2.com/resources/papers/centrality.pdf

⁵⁹ <http://www.downtowncornerstone.org/2010/11/the-church-and-the-city>

⁶⁰ <http://www.whm.org/gcl>

⁶¹ www.monergism.com/postmodernidols.html

Appendix B: One Another's

Biblical Community.

(“One another’s” through the scriptures)

Love.

John 13:34-35—A new commandment I give to you, that you love **one another**, even as I have loved you, that you also love **one another**. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for **one another**.

John 15:12—This is My commandment, that you love **one another**, just as I have loved you.

John 15:17—This I command you, that you love **one another**.

Romans 13:8—Owe nothing to anyone except to love **one another**; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.

1 Thessalonians 3:12—and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for **one another**, and for all people, just as we also do for you;

1 Thessalonians 4:9—Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love **one another**.

1 Peter 1:22—Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love **one another** from the heart.

1 Peter 4:8—Above all, keep fervent in your love for **one another**, because love covers a multitude of sins.

1 John 3:11—For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love **one another**.

1 John 3:23—This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love **one another**, just as He commanded us.

1 John 4:7—Beloved, let us love **one another**, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

1 John 4:11—Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love **one another**.

2 John 5—Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love **one another**.

Comfort & Encourage.

1 Thessalonians 4:18—Therefore comfort **one another** with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:11—Therefore encourage one another and build up **one another**, just as you also are doing.

Hebrews 3:13—But encourage **one another day** after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 10:24-25—Let us consider how to stimulate **one another** to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging **one another**; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Greet.

Romans 16:16—Greet **one another** with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

1 Corinthians 16:20—All the brethren greet you. Greet **one another** with a holy kiss.

2 Corinthians 13:12—Greet **one another** with a holy kiss.

1 Peter 5:14—Greet **one another** with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.

Same Mind.

Romans 12:16—Be of the same mind toward **one another**; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

Romans 15:56—Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with **one another** according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

At Peace.

Mark 9:50—Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with **one another**.

1 Thessalonians 5:13—Live in peace with **one another**.

Build Up.

Romans 14:19—So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of **one another**.

1 Thessalonians 5:11—Therefore encourage **one another** and build up **one another**...

Admonish.

Romans 15:14—And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish **one another**.

Colossians 3:16—Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing **one another** with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Serve.

Galatians 5:13—For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve **one another**.

1 Peter 4:10—As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving **one another** as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Show Tolerance.

Ephesians 4:2—with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for **one another** in love,

Colossians 3:13—bearing with **one another**, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

Humility.

Philippians 2:3—Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard **one another** as more important than yourselves.

1 Peter 5:5—You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward **one another**, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Wash Feet.

John 13:14—If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash **one another's** feet.

Devoted.

Romans 12:10—Be devoted to **one another** in brotherly love; give preference to **one another** in honor (“respectfully lead one another by example”)

Accept.

Romans 15:7—Therefore, accept **one another**, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

Care.

1 Corinthians 12:25—so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for **one another**.

Bear Burdens.

Galatians 6:2—Bear **one another's** burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

Members.

Ephesians 4:25—Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of **one another**.

Be Kind.

Ephesians 4:32—Be kind to **one another**, tenderhearted, forgiving **each other**, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Speak Truth.

Ephesians 5:19—speaking to **one another** in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord.

Subject.

Ephesians 5:21—and be subject to **one another** in the fear of Christ.

Seek After Good.

1 Thessalonians 5:15—See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for **one another** and for all people.

Confess & Pray.

James 5:16—Therefore, confess your sins to **one another**, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

Be Hospitable.

1 Peter 4:9—Be hospitable to **one another** without complaint.

Negatives.

Romans 14:13—Therefore let us not judge **one another** anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.

1 Corinthians 6:7—Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with **one another**. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?

1 Corinthians 7:5—Stop depriving **one another**, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self control.

1 Corinthians 11:33—So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for **one another**.

Galatians 5:15—But if you bite and devour **one another**, take care that you are not consumed by **one another**.

Galatians 5:26—Let us not become boastful, challenging **one another**, envying **one another**.

Colossians 3:9—Do not lie to **one another**, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices,

James 4:11—Do not speak against **one another**, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.

James 5:9—Do not complain, brethren, against **one another**, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.