

USING THE THINGS YOU AND OTHERS ENJOY DOING
TO POINT OTHERS TO THE GREATER JOY FOUND IN JESUS

P A S S I O N
M I S S I O N

TURNING YOUR PASSION
INTO YOUR MISSION

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Introduction: A Change In Perspective

It was raining one morning when I headed out on a run at a local lake area, so I didn't wear my prescription glasses which usually fog up and get covered in water on damp days. Midway through the loop, I saw two men wearing trench coats emerging from the woods onto my path. One carried a shotgun, and the other was brandishing a pistol, both of which were prohibited in the park. These guys were doing something illegal. I interrupted them. They saw me. And they were now headed straight for me.

My pace slowed, and my mind raced as they blocked my path and continued toward me. I could turn and run away, but I knew that wouldn't work. I'm reasonably fast, but I'm not Superman "*faster than a speeding bullet*" fast! I started to panic. I frantically looked around for help or a way to escape through the underbrush. Nothing. We got closer and closer to each other, and with every step, the tension grew.

It was then that I drew close enough for my near-sightedness to enable me see more clearly. They weren't carrying firearms at all. It wasn't a shotgun that one of the men carried, but rather it was a long umbrella. The other man didn't have a pistol in his hand, but rather a leash. Yeah, there was a little dog I hadn't even seen yet. And they weren't wearing trench coats; they were wearing rain jackets. I thought it was all gangsta, and it turned out to be a couple of guys that looked like Gorton fishermen out walking a dog! Whew. I dodged a bullet there. Well, sorta.

It's amazing the difference a simple change in how we see things can make. A change in perspective enables us to see things we didn't see before or see the same things as before in a different way. When we start seeing things differently, we start doing things differently.

My prayer for our time together is very simple: that God would give us a new and grand perspective on the things we do for enjoyment so that we see how they can be used to make a difference for the kingdom of God which will ripple throughout eternity. That these things can be holy endeavors. May God grant that we look at running and ultimate frisbee and watching movies and reading and grilling out and see something different, see something more than just a way to enjoy ourselves. I'm asking that He would help us see how to turn our passion into our mission.

THE REASON WE EXIST

Let me set things up by stating the end game so we can be on the same page about what we're after. There is a question that most of us ask at some point in our lives as we consider the purpose of our lives: *Why am I here?* There is this hard-wired desire in each us to know the reason we were made and what we were made to do.

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You may state the conclusion differently than I do, but the words of my personal mission statement offer the basic meaning for why God in His grace gets us up each morning:

*"I exist to know Jesus and make Him known
so that God is honored in us and we are happy in Him."*

So that's it... Starting with ourselves and spreading to our circles of influence, we are after one ultimate objective: an honored God and happy people. Anything else is too small a thing to live for. But we can take the smaller things of life and use them for this purpose.

And here's how we're going to get there. I've divided our teaching into three parts:

1. *Your Passion*, where we'll consider what you do for recreation – we'll spend the least amount of time here.
2. *Your Mission*, which is where we'll take a closer look at your role in God's redemptive work in the world. We'll spend a little more time here. And then, finally...
3. *Turning Your Passion Into Your Mission* where we'll see how these two things intersect and how you can use the things you and others enjoy as a platform to point others to the greater and ultimate joy found in knowing Jesus. This is where we will spend most of our time.

Let me begin by briefly sharing just a few thoughts about *Your Passion*...

PART ONE: “Your Passion”

THE THINGS YOU LOVE DOING

First, these are things you love doing. They could be painting, cooking, writing or water-skiing. They could be photography, boardgames, cookouts or crossfit. They could be flying drones, collecting sports cards, listening to music or hanging out in coffee shops. Whatever non-sinful things you enthusiastically do for enjoyment falls into this category. These are your interests, pastimes, recreations and hobbies - the activities that you do as often as possible because you take delight in doing them.

THE THINGS YOU ARE ALREADY DOING

Second, these are things you are already doing. You don't need to add something new to your already busy schedule; you can use what is already on your schedule. Right now, most of us have activities that we engage in on a regular basis for recreation and relaxation. Whether that's daily, weekly, monthly or some other frequency, this is an already established, normal rhythm for us. So, this isn't some kind of new thing that is going to disrupt the routines you have in place by adding in something or crowding out something. This is a transformation. You're going to turn something already on your schedule into something else.

THE THINGS YOU CAN DO MISSIONALLY

Third, these are things you can do missionally. What I'm suggesting is simply this... that space on your schedule is holy. It's not just set aside for fun and games; it's set aside as a specific place and period of time that can be used to carry out your calling. That is, you can simply show up and show others what Jesus is like by being a faithful witness while doing the things you are already doing and love doing. You don't always have to choose between passion and mission for how you use your time; they can actually be one and the same. Whether you crochet or cook out or whatever you do for enjoyment, you can do it to the glory of God.

When we talk about *Your Passion*, the thing I hope we all see is this: our hobbies and interests don't have to be in the way of God's plan, they can be a part of God's plan. Your zip code is not an accident. You live there. You work there. You play there. But God placed you there. He worked in ways that you could never comprehend or calculate to divinely position you right where you are at this very moment and this very season. Life didn't just take you there. He did. He has hard-wired things into your DNA, brought about circumstances in your life, allowed you to pursue and enjoy interests, put other people around you, and brought it all together for eternal good. You were made for this.

PART TWO: “Your Mission”

That’s a good place for us to move from talking about *Your Passion* to talking about *Your Mission*. A verse that has become very important to me is 2 Corinthians 5:20 which reads,

“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

An ambassador is always FROM someone and TO someone; you are sent from Jesus and sent to the specific people in your life, such as your family, your friends, your neighbors, your co-workers, your teammates, and every other person you find yourself with so God can make an appeal for their hearts through you.

This appeal that is being made through you and me is for people to come to God (and come back to God over and over again throughout their lifetimes) so that He is honored in them and they are happy in Him. How is God honored in us? How do we find happiness in Him? By knowing and making known Jesus. To know Him means personally, intimately, experientially walking with Jesus by following Him in faith to experience the incredible blessings and benefits of belonging to Him, now and forever.

This shared life with Jesus is a spiritual journey referred to in the Bible as a “walk” in which we take one step at a time together with Him. The closer we are to Him, the more we will find real happiness in Him, and He will be honored through us. Therefore, this is our focus: We follow Jesus. We help others follow Jesus.

As you know, Jesus said in Matthew 28:19-20...

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (ESV)

To make disciples based on what Jesus said there means to: get people converted, baptize them and then teach them to lovingly obey all that Jesus commands. I add “lovingly” because Jesus said in John 14:15-24 that it is those that love Him who obey His commandments. So, through our words and way of life, we are to model for others how to think and feel and act as a people whose love for and commitment to Jesus is growing. We are to help others know, follow and enjoy Jesus as they take steps in their walk with Him.

You might think of it like this...

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- The initial part of disciple-making is helping others find their way to new life in Jesus.
- The ongoing part of disciple-making is helping others follow the new way of life with Jesus.

MAKING DISCIPLES WHO MAKE DISCIPLES

In order for God to be honored in the lives of more and more people, and for more and more people to find their happiness in God, we must reproduce our faith and teach others to do the same. This is known as making disciples who make disciples.

I'm going to give you some simple definitions to keep this really understandable and doable for us, but lest there be any confusion, let me be clear. When I'm talking about disciples, I'm talking about people who have experienced a genuine conversion in which they have repented and believed the gospel, and are persevering in the faith whether it's their 10th day or 10,000th day with Jesus.

These are Christians.

That leads us to some simple definitions:

- A disciple is a follower of Jesus.
- Discipleship is the ongoing process of following Jesus.
- Disciple-making is the ongoing process of helping others follow Jesus.

This is our great commission. We must continually encourage other people to follow Jesus because the world is continually encouraging them not to follow Him.

What that means for us as disciple-makers is this:

We help others take the next step in their spiritual journey with Jesus.

THE FOUR BASIC STEPS WE MODEL AND TEACH

Whether this is the very first step for someone who has just met Jesus or the very last step for someone about to meet Jesus face-to-face, there are four basic steps that we should encourage others to take in their walk with Jesus. These are four basic steps that every Christian takes from the beginning, and they never stop taking until they follow Jesus all the way home:

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1. Pray.
2. Read the Bible.
3. Respond to what God tells you.
4. Help others do the same.

This is how we know, follow, enjoy and share God! Certainly we will take mis-steps along the way; but Jesus will never lose us on the way.

Taking the four basic steps of the Christian lifestyle will produce other specific steps of faith. This will vary greatly...

- For some people, the next step is learning to share their faith.
- For some people, the next step is fighting against an addiction or sin.
- For some people, the next step is volunteering, serving, and using gifts.
- For some people, the next step is in their marital life, financial life, vocational life, recreational life, or social life.
- For some people, the next step is forgiving someone, dealing with a hurt or anger, or seeking help for an everyday life issue.
- For some people, the next step is learning to experience the peace, joy, hope, contentment, rest, security, comfort, guidance, companionship and other blessings that Jesus offers.
- For some people, the next step is to escape legalism, embrace living by grace, and go deeper into the truths of the gospel.
- For some people, the next step is to better know and love and enjoy and glorify God.

There are countless unique and specific steps that might be the next one in front of any unique and specific person. Our aim is to help them identify what that next step is and lovingly walk with them as they journey on. We are on a mission *from Jesus to people* for the purpose of making disciples by pointing them again and again to those four steps which center on the Word of God: read it, pray it, live it, share it. We are ambassadors who speak on His behalf, share His message, and send out His

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invitation to come find life in Him. And anyone can do this because Jesus has promised to be with us always.

As a sidenote, for someone who has not yet become a Christian, their next step will look different than someone who is already a Christian. Disciple-making in that instance has the initial goal of leading them to saving faith in Jesus. So, their next step might be to ask questions or voice their skepticism or just show up and listen or something that might not be a step of faith, but a step toward faith whether they realize it or not.

So, let me wrap up *Your Mission* with some concluding, summarizing thoughts. You and I are on earth for a reason, and that reason is this: God has called us by His grace to know and make known Jesus. His perfect life. His atoning sacrifice. His resurrection power. His heart for people. His message of love. His life-transforming hope. His offer of eternal life. His amazing grace. His matchless value. His endless joy. His immeasurable benefits. His imminent return. His soul-satisfying glory. His incredibly good news.

God has graciously transformed our lives and sent us back out to be agents of His transformation in the lives of other people. We are who we are because of what Jesus has done for us; we do what we do because of who we are in Jesus. Christian is the adjective that is to describe and define every category and moment of our lives as we represent Jesus 24/7 to those in our lives.

As ambassadors for Christ, we have been summoned into the most important work in the universe: to spread the message and ministry of reconciliation as God makes His appeal for the hearts of others through us. The thoughts, feelings, motives, attitudes, words and actions of our lives need to communicate one thing with absolute clarity and certainty: life with Jesus is far better than life without Him, and eternal life is found only through Him. We will do this imperfectly, of course, but we rest in God's grace as we strive to make Jesus more visible in more areas of our lives. So, that's *Your Mission*.

PART THREE: “Your Passion = Your Mission”

Several years ago, my wife, Paula, and I were eating at a restaurant, and all I ordered was a steak, baked potato and Texas toast. And it took forever to get my food.

They brought Paula’s order out, and she waited for a long time for mine to arrive before eating her own. But there was still no food. She finally started eating her meal so it wouldn’t get cold. She ate it all, and my food still wasn’t in sight. I was wearing my glasses, so it wasn’t a problem with my eyesight this time. The food really wasn’t there.

After we had been there almost an hour, I called our server over ... again ... and asked, “*What is going on with my food?*” She replied, “*I’m so sorry for the delay, but only the manager can make Texas toast.*”

What?! “*Only the manager can make Texas toast.*” I’m looking around for cameras. This is a prank, right? What kind of specialized training or certification or supervisory role is required in order to put a piece of bread into a toaster? Ha-ha. I’m thinking that my wife has set me up for some fun. Nope. This is for real. It is just what it looks like it is: making toast is a skill that only the upper-level management possess, and he was on a break. LOL. Too funny!

Finally, she comes back and says, “*It’s almost done, here’s what we’re going to do because of the delay.*” I’m thinking free meal, free dessert, free gift card. Oh no. What I got was a free box. She said, “*Since we’ve made you wait so long, we’re just going to bring it to you in a take-out box so you can go ahead and leave.*” Thanks a lot. I knew we should have gone to Chick-Fil-A.

Here’s where I’m going with this: When it comes to carrying out the great commission, there is a tendency to think that only pastors can make disciples. Or only missionaries can make disciples. Or only experienced Bible teachers can make disciples. Many people have this idea that some kind of specialized training or certification or upper-level role is required in order to make disciples. But that’s simply not true.

As I’ve said and will continue to say, any follower of Jesus can do this, and every follower of Jesus has been called to do this. And what I’m building toward today is that *Your Passion* and *Your Mission* are not mutually exclusive, but rather they can and should share the same space. Or, said differently: One of the ways you can carry out *Your Mission* is through *Your Passion*. The things you do for your fun can be the things you do from your faith. Anything good that you love doing can be used to point people to the love of Jesus so that God is honored in us and we are happy in Him.

And that’s how we’re going to spend the remainder of our time together as we consider what it can look like to *Turn Your Passion Into Your Mission*.

THE BASIC FRAMEWORK FOR HOSTING MISSIONAL EVENTS

So, what I want to do now is share with you a basic framework for turning your “*passion*” into your “*mission*.” It is applicable to just about any (non-sinful) shared interest you have with other people.

The whole idea in a nutshell is this:

Gather with people who share your passion so you can share Jesus.

This involves three very simple steps which I will unpack with real examples of what we have done and give you some ideas for what it might look like for you to do these as well. In fact, these three steps are so simple that their explanation will only take about a minute for each of them. Here they are...

Step One: Select A Location.

In this first step, all you need to determine is when and where you are going to participate in your activity. This could be a gym (workout), a local park (ultimate frisbee), a trailhead (walk / hike), a living room (movie or game night), a backyard (cookout), a stadium parking lot (tailgating), a kitchen (cooking), a meeting room (book club), or any of countless other interest-specific locations. If you need to obtain special permission or make a reservation in order to secure your venue, do so before step two.

Once you decide the place, you need to set a time for the gathering. This could be morning, afternoon or evening; this could be a weekday or a weekend. It can be whenever is convenient to your schedule or whenever you are already doing the activity as a part of your regular routine. At this point, you should have all of the relevant details to share with other people. For example: A cookout on Sunday, September 5 at 6PM in my backyard. And that’s it for this step. Super simple. Anyone can do this. You’re going to hear me say that over and over ... Anyone. Can. Do. This.

Step Two: Send An Invitation.

After you have set the time and place for your gathering, you will want to reach out (via text, email, phone, social media or face-to-face) to people you think might be interested in joining you, and ask them to attend. You will generally receive more positive responses when you give people a 1-2 week advance notice so they can add your event to their schedule before the date becomes unavailable.

So, who should you invite? Start with those who you know personally and those you know who share a passion for your activity. That’s two categories:

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1. Start by inviting the people you already have a relationship with rather than those you don't, and from within those people, start with those who enjoy the activity that you are hosting rather than those who have not expressed interest in it.
2. From there, you can extend outward to other people in your life and other people in your community.

Of course, you can also encourage those who plan to join you to bring someone with them, which will increase your reach even more.

Let's work through a quick example. Let's suppose you are going to organize a hike. You would start by inviting other people you personally know who are hikers, then you could invite other people you personally know who may or may not actively hike, and then finally you could invite other hikers you don't already know by posting an invitation to a Facebook® group of local hikers in your area.

Depending upon the size of your venue and the nature of the activity, be sure you invite the number of people that can be accommodated.

For example, you can likely invite more people to a backyard cookout than you can to a game night in your living room.

Again, are you tracking with me that anyone can do this?

Step Three: Share a Devotion.

I want to emphasize that the first two steps are things you're already doing anyway, right? You're already going to a specific place at a specific time to enjoy a specific interest, probably with other specific people. This third step is what will probably be new for you, *but it's just as easy to accomplish as the first two, and it is THE thing that transforms your passion into your mission.* You point those people who are with you at a specific time, place and activity – you point those people to Jesus by sharing a short devotional reading with them.

While people are gathered for the activity, simply read a 1-5 minute entry from your favorite devotional book. And in that one simple step and brief bit of time, you give God a gigantic platform from which He can work in the hearts of those in attendance. *You don't have to prep a message or even write a word.* Just read. You will not find a much easier way to point people to Jesus.

When you should share this short talk will depend upon the nature of the activity itself. For example, you might share the devotion before a run since it would be difficult to do so during a

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run, and people will likely finish the run at varying times. You might share a devotion midway through a cookout so the food doesn't get cold and since people tend to leave at varying times. And so forth.

While you can choose any devotional book to share from...

It is important that you include a verse or passage of the Bible in your reading.

Man's words can be helpful, but they are not a substitute for the power of God's words. Choose a devotional that begins with something from the Scriptures or references something from the Scriptures in its message. One that I highly recommend is *New Morning Mercies* by Paul David Tripp. Or if you want some readings about a minute long, I've got a lot of free resources available at JimmyBrown.com

Location. Invitation. Devotion. Anyone can do this.

We're about to look at some real examples of these three steps put into practice, but before we do, let me say something important about setting the right expectations for your gathering.

*You'll want to tell people up front (in your invitation)
that you will be sharing this short faith talk.*

You will likely do more harm than help if you invite people to your gathering and spring the devotion on them without any advance notice. Some people will feel like they were invited under false pretenses. So, when I invite people to join me (prior to the event itself), I like to say something like this:

"Before we get started with our run, I'm going to share a 10-minute personal story and message from the Bible that I hope encourages you and helps you in your everyday life."

That way, everyone who attends knows what they are coming to and doesn't feel misled. We're really transparent about our faith and let people know that we want to not only invite them to an enjoyable outing, but we want to invite them into our hope and happiness that we have in Jesus.

My general guideline is this...

*If someone gets offended, let it be by the gospel
and not the appearance of some wrongdoing on my part.*

With that framework outlined for you, let me give you some ideas of what this might look like by

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sharing some real-life examples of what we've been doing and, more importantly, what we've seen God doing through these events.

REAL-LIFE "PASSION INTO MISSION" EXAMPLES

Example #1: Runner Church.

We completed seven years of doing this ministry in the Omaha, Nebraska area, and had hundreds, if not thousands, of runners attend our events. It started with just a few runners attending and grew into a high-season average of 30-40 runners with as many as 90 runners attending a single gathering.

We met twice per month on Sunday mornings during Spring, Summer and Fall at locations throughout the Greater Omaha area that are frequented by runners who don't attend church because it's a prime time for running. We chose our locations based on upcoming races that people were training for so people would join us for a message and then run on the actual race course, and we set up events on Facebook and sent invitations to the nearly 700 runners who followed our page.

My messages were usually about 10-minutes (and something that I wrote and prepared myself), and then we invited people to an ongoing Bible study that we hosted in our home on most Sunday evenings throughout the year. Of course, we had conversations during runs as well. The community grew to the point that we regularly volunteered to host aid stations at races throughout the year, were invited to speak before races at a number of signature events, and became well known throughout the area with dozens of runners wearing Runner Church shirts and bringing friends along with them to our gatherings. All of this started with the simple 3-step process that I've outlined for you, and God grew it from there.

We saw people put their faith in Jesus, people grow in their faith in Jesus and people share their faith in Jesus. God graciously transformed lives. All glory to Him!

Location. Invitation. Devotion. Anyone can do this.

Example #2: House Hospitality.

Just about every month, and often multiple times per month, we host special events at our home. During the holidays, we have as many people over as our house can hold for things like watching fireworks on Independence Day, a Thanksgiving meal (especially for people who don't have a place to go), a Christmas party with a white elephant gift exchange, and so forth. From Memorial Day to Labor Day, we have regular cookouts in our backyard with 20-30 people at each of them. We host movie nights, Super Bowl parties, Fantasy Football drafts, board game nights, dessert socials and

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anything we can think of to model how Jesus welcomes us in by welcoming other people into our home and our lives.

I've thought many times how amazingly gracious our God is ... we get to serve His eternal Kingdom purposes by eating ice cream sundaes and playing croquet and sitting by a firepit. With every event, we share a brief 3-5 minute Bible devotion so people understand that the reason we are loving on them is because Jesus loves on us.

Over the years, we've been able to entertain hundreds of people in these on-ramp events, and here's what we've found. People are much more likely to come to our Bible studies if they have first visited our home for a fun event. The fun stuff is sort of an icebreaker that helps them feel comfortable so that coming back for a 2-hour Bible study isn't such a big step for them to take.

This is a wonderful way to turn your passion into your mission by turning your house into a place of hospitality for the people you know. Think about something like Fantasy Football – you could have people over to your house every Monday evening during the season and have a short devotion at half-time. With 17 weeks of a season, plus pre-season, draft and playoffs, this would be almost half a year to interact with other players with numerous opportunities to share Jesus with them.

Location. Invitation. Devotion. Anyone can do this.

Example #3: Faithercise.

As our season of life changed, so did our ministry. Our son, Jacob, graduated college, got married and moved to Kansas. And Paula and I relocated to Gulf Shores, Alabama where we are active in our local church and are soon starting Faithercise.

Faithercise will be very similar to Runner Church, except it's not just for runners. We're also including walkers and cyclists because of where we are meeting and who is attending.

We will be meeting multiple times monthly on Saturday mornings in Gulf Shores at a state park which has over 20 miles of paved recreational trails and is the perfect venue for walkers, runners and cyclists to enjoy getting steps or miles in.

1. We are including walkers because there is an older population in this area, particularly during winter when snowbirds from northern states come down for a few months.
2. We are including cyclists because not only is there a large group of people who ride bikes, but the state park actually offers free bike rentals for visitors, and this is quite popular.

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3. We are including runners because, of course, that's my passion and there are plenty of them in the area as well.

There are a couple of things we love about hosting this ministry in Gulf Shores...

First, because temperatures are warmer at the beginning and ending of the year, we are able to extend our season of ministry much longer than we could in Omaha due to its harsh winter months. Nobody wants to stand around in freezing weather listening to me talk. Not even my wife. LOL.

Second, because this is a tourist and snowbird destination, we have the opportunity to reach people who are not local to the area. This gives us an opportunity to not only share the gospel with them, but also to train believers to turn their own passion into their mission wherever they come from.

The point I want to make in this third example is this...

Set things up in whatever way works best for your context and your community.

Faithercise is very similar to Runner Church, but it's been tweaked a bit because we're in a different place with different people than we were before. Regardless of where you're at, what you're doing or who you're with, the 3 steps are the same...

Location. Invitation. Devotion. Anyone can do this.

Now, I hope your perspective is changing on how you see the things you love doing. I hope you are seeing things differently and seeing clearly the point in all of this...

You can use your favorite hobby, interest or pastime to point people to Jesus.

That's THE key to everything that I'm suggesting ... it's at the heart of turning your passion into your mission ... *use it to point people to Jesus*. No matter how enjoyable our time is with others doing things we all love to do, it's not going to make a life-changing, eternity-changing difference if it doesn't lead to Jesus.

Let me give an example....

A dear Christian friend of mine is an advocate for curing a specific kind of cancer and he does all kinds of things to raise awareness and raise funds to support this cause through events, gatherings and races with other like-minded people. And I'm 100% in favor of it. My prayer is that we are able to completely eradicate this cancer and all cancers. Many people I love have suffered from it,

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including my mom and one of my closest friends. So, I'm 100% in favor of people devoting themselves to their passion of finding cures.

But that's not enough. And I really want to be sensitive in this, so I hope you've already heard my heart – but here's the thing: if we cure every cancer known to man, something else is going to kill us. We're all going to die. So, while we are raising awareness and raising funds to find cures – and by all means, let's do this and be diligent in it – let's even more importantly give people the good news that sin can be cured, that real hope can be found, that eternal life can be gained by putting our faith in Jesus. That's turning your passion into your mission. You don't have to choose between one or the other.

Now...

With those three simple steps as the process, let's move on to something that is really important. It is essential that we do not think of disciple-making as something that can be done quickly or something that is someone else's responsibility. We're going to have a hard time *"teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you"* (Matthew 28:19c) in a single setting.

That is an impossible task. That is also not what Jesus has commissioned us to do. *Disciple-making isn't a one-time, one-and-done activity; it is an ongoing process.* We have been commissioned to PERSONALLY be a part of that journey with other people, equipping and encouraging them to take appropriate steps in faith and loving obedience to all that Jesus commands.

So, your event is an on-ramp, an entry-point, an introduction of sorts to something more lasting and more influential and more transformative that is to come.

MOVING FROM EVENT DAY TO EVERY DAY

As you move from *"event day"* to *"every day,"* there are four basic ways to personally help the people in attendance make a move toward better knowing, following and enjoying Jesus...

1. Pray That God Reveals A Next Step To Those In Attendance.

We speak for God, but there is no substitute for asking God to speak for Himself. Every event gathering should be saturated with prayer leading up to it as we look to God to move upon the hearts and minds of those in attendance so that they respond as He intends to the Bible-based, gospel-centered, Jesus-exalting devotion that we share with them. This is not a finishing touch; it is the foundation on which everything else depends. We ask God to do what only He can do: give people *"ears that hear"* His voice guiding them in how to respond to the message.

2. Suggest A Relevant Next Step For Those In Attendance.

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It's a good practice to include at least one relevant next step that you verbalize as you share the chosen devotion. We can't "*teach them to obey*" without giving them some idea of what that might look like in a way that they can apply to their own lives. Practical application is just that... practical. Of course, what we suggest that attendees do as a response to the message should be grounded in what Jesus has first done or has first promised to do. "*Trying harder to do better*" without the sweet assurance of the good news of the finished work and faithfulness of Jesus will quickly spiral into religious rule-keeping. This will rob people of joy, not lead them deeper into it.

3. Extend An Invitation For A Next Step For Those In Attendance.

There are some specific next steps that we can also include (especially at the conclusion of our event) which act as a "*part two*" to follow-up on those in attendance. These include... inviting people to a gathering of the church, inviting people to meet with your small group, inviting people into your home (for dinner, game night, etc.) and inviting people into your life. Notice the ever-increasing intimacy of these invitations: large group, small group, family, one-on-one. There are two key people in each of these scenes: you and the other person(s). Of course, there is also a third Person in the mix as well, which reminds us to always... Invite people to receive Christ at our events. At a minimum, we should extend the invitation to receive Christ as Lord, Savior and Treasure, and it's a good idea to extend one of the other types of invitations as well.

4. Offer To Personally Take A Next Step With Those In Attendance.

Investing > Inviting. It is our personal responsibility to make disciples. You. Me. Every single Christian. If we are following Jesus ourselves, then it's our responsibility to help other people follow Him as well. Inviting people to attend church is a good thing to do ... as long as that's not the only thing we do. That's not disciple-making. That's handing people off to someone else for disciple-making. Inviting is good as long as it leads to investing. In other words, it's good to invite others to a church gathering, small group, into your life and especially to receive Jesus ... but don't leave them there. While disciple-making can and should be done in Christian community, someone has to take ownership of personally walking with the other person to invest in their spiritual well-being and growth. That's what we are commissioned to do.

This is a good place for me to say this...

There is no one-size-fits-all way to "make a disciple."

There isn't a default method of helping others take the next step in their journey with Jesus that will work for everyone. I'm not going to tell you how you should do it – it will vary based on a lot of factors such as schedules, interest level, and maturity. There are a lot of great resources available on

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discipleship, so I don't want to re-package or re-state what plenty of other people have already done better than I could do if I did try.

So, these events – are great catalysts for the ongoing discipling of other people as you help them take the next steps in following Jesus.

Location. Invitation. Devotion. Anyone can do this.

With that said, let me add a few finishing and summarizing things to consider. Here are a dozen of them...

PASSION INTO MISSION CONSIDERATIONS

1. Consider these occasions as an *"on-ramp"* to something more lasting and personal. These are a great way to reach other people so you can welcome them in for an ongoing relationship.
2. It's good to invite a mix of believers and unbelievers to participate. Disciple-making is best done in community, and this will allow other Christians to love on future Christians.
3. These events also provide great benefits to believers themselves as the message can encourage and equip them in their own journey with Jesus and...
4. You can train other believers to host their own events as you model for them what it looks like to *"turn your passion into your mission."* In fact...
5. Be intentional about involving other believers in your mission and encouraging them to follow your model by following the same three steps that you follow. Feel free to give them a copy of this training to help them.
6. We will never reach the world with the good news of Jesus by addition; it will only happen by multiplication as we train and send the people we know out into the world.
7. If you feel comfortable doing so, pray for those who are gathered after you read the devotion. You may also ask another believer to close your event in prayer. Asking God to speak to and help all in attendance is always a good option.
8. Be sure to consider any conflict for your location. If there is an existing event, a closing at the location you chose or some other thing that would interfere, then choose a different location or a different date.

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9. Tell people if they have any questions or want to talk further, they can speak to you after the conclusion or contact you anytime throughout the week. Of course, you will want to provide contact information – be as guarded about how you connect with others as you feel comfortable.
10. You don't have to share someone else's devotion. If you have the skill and interest to write your own messages, then do so. Typically, you'll want to keep these to ten minutes or less. And if seating isn't available, be sure to remind attendees to bring their own chairs.
11. Consider making this a regular event (same place, same time) every week or every other week. This can create ongoing opportunities to share a gospel message with attenders and make disciples over an extended period of time.
12. Share a gospel presentation and invite people to respond by putting their faith in Jesus for salvation. We want people to be warned about God's wrath for sin and wooed by God's grace for sinners.

Something that we do which isn't necessary but can be helpful is this...

We try to get additional resources into the hands of our attendees that can help them in their spiritual journey throughout the week.

We give away physical copies of *There Is Grace For You*, which is a little book of 40 devotionals about grace – what it is, how to live by it, and so forth. Plus we point our guests to JimmyBrown.com for digital copies of devotionals, Bible studies, etc.

There are plenty of free resources online, so in time, you may want to consider recommending to your attendees the things your favorite ministry makes available at their website.

You've got your passion. You've got your mission. And I'm suggesting that these two things don't have to be opposed to each other, and you don't have to be divided in how you spend your time. You can turn your passion into your mission.

While I've given you a lot of ideas and details, don't let any of that complicate the simple 3-step process...

Location. Invitation. Devotion. Anyone can do this.

You do this in whatever way is easiest and best for you. You don't have to do everything; but you should do something. Make those three steps as simple for you to take as possible. You can always

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add in more details later. Think of it like art: get started with the broad strokes and add the finer strokes over time.

I said at the beginning that my prayer for our time together is simply that God would graciously give you a new perspective for seeing the things you do for enjoyment as opportunities to make an everlasting difference.

THE 100-YEAR TEST FOR HOW WE USE OUR TIME

Here's the thing...

- 100 years from now it will not matter if I ran marathons, traveled to national parks in Utah, grilled burgers in my backyard, ran a multi-million-dollar business, served in my community, played Fantasy Football or hung out at the beach.
- It will matter in 100 years – and for all eternity – if I did all of those same things - in a way that made Jesus known so that God is honored in my audience and they are happy in Him.

There is a line from a poem by CT Studd that captures this thought well... *"Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last."*

When our son Jacob was 2 years old, he could quote the Bible verse, John 3:16. So one day as we were headed out the door after the morning service at a new church we were attending, the children's church director happened to be right behind us.

And I decided that it would be a good opportunity to show off my son's ability to quote that verse. I turned to him and said, *"Jacob, can you quote John 3:16 for Miss Nora?"* Jacob did NOT quote John 3:16. Instead, Jacob quoted something from one of his favorite movies, Stuart Little. Jacob looked at Miss Nora, He looked at me, and he said, *"Read my furry pink lips, NO!"* Bwahahahahaha.

Now, guys, I don't think any of us here today would respond to the great commission to go and make disciples by looking at Jesus and saying, *"Read my furry pink lips, NO!"* I'm thinking that's not our issue. I'm praying that's not our issue. But, there are a lot of ways to say "no" to what we have been assigned to do with our lives.

*One of the greatest dangers and deceptions that you
and I will face is that of disobedience by delay.*

That is, we will be tempted to wait to do what God has called us to do as an ambassador for Christ. Wait until we get caught up, get back from vacation, get the house built, get the kids into college,

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get through this season, get a better schedule or get something else out of the way or into place so we can focus on doing this. If we're not careful, we'll wait until a more convenient time, thinking we have plenty of time, but more often than not, we will run out of time.

For most of us, God doesn't mean for us to wait until some future day to serve Him by going out in a million-dollar blaze of glory, but rather He wants us to give ourselves to Him in daily nickels and dimes of service to those around us. Do the things you're going to do anyway and you want to do anyway, but do them in a way that points the way to Jesus.

Location. Invitation. Devotion. Anyone can do this.

THE PASSION AND MISSION OF JESUS

Hebrews 12:1-2 says this...

[1] Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, [2] looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (ESV)

In these verses, we see the *passion* and *mission* of Jesus linked together as one thing.

What was His *passion*? It is seen in a couple of senses...

1. *In one sense, His passion was the "joy" that awaited Him after enduring the cross.* The joy of glorifying His Father. The joy of saving His people. The joy of receiving His reward. What was His *passion*? God's honor and our happiness as He is exalted to God's right hand to be enjoyed and made much of forever. The ultimate successful outcome of His finished work was the "joy" set before Him. It was the end result of all that would be accomplished through His incarnation.
2. *In another sense, His passion was the cross itself, that He willingly endured.* It was suffering. Suffering that paid for the grace that is given to help us carry on in His mission. Suffering that secured the power for us to get this right and the pardon for us when we get it wrong. What was His *passion*? Crucifixion. It was the death, burial and resurrection with its stunning, far-reaching and wondrous implications that is the very substance of the good news we are commissioned to share with others.

What was His *mission*?

The same thing. To endure the cross so that the joy on the other side of fulfilling the Father's will on

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earth would be unleashed forever. That's why He came. His crucifixion was both His passion (suffering) and His mission (saving). He did it for His Father. He did it for Himself. He did it for you and me. He did it for those who will come to know Him because we take our own passion and turn it into our mission ... which is really His mission.

Don't you see? The only reason we can be called into His mission is because He first called us into His family. He saves us before He sends us. He gives us grace to know Him before He gives us grace to make Him known. He invites us to come before He tells us to go. He did this for us so we could do this for Him. He came to graciously redeem and remake us so we could know Him and make Him known so that God is honored in us and we are happy in Him... now and forever! The LOCATION is the cross. The INVITATION is to come to Him. The DEVOTION is the good news of grace.

Location. Invitation. Devotion. *Only Jesus could do this.*

He finished what ONLY HE could do and sends us out to do what ANYONE can do through Him. Will you let God make His appeal for the hearts of the people you know through you? Will you not waste your life on things that will not matter the very second you take your last breath? Will you by the grace of God turn your passion into your mission? Will you be encouraged and equipped by His presence and power to start right now while there is yet time to be a part of the greatest work in the universe by joining Jesus in His mission?

Listen, there are people out there – unbelievers and believers alike - who desperately need to know what you know about Jesus. They need to know what it means to put their faith in Jesus or what it looks like to take a step of faith with Jesus. They need to know that hope and peace and rest and security and wisdom and purpose and strength and love and joy and life can be found in Jesus. They need some good news, and you have it.

Yes, some people will reject your witness; but others will be drawn to Jesus through it and have their lives changed forever. May you use your golf and your travel and your cookouts and your classic cars and your baking and your gardening and your running and any other hobby, interest or pastime for this great aim: to make known Jesus Christ so that God is honored in us and we are happy in Him now and forever.

Connecting With Me

If you have questions about any of the enclosed material, or if you have any other questions about life with Jesus, please reach out to me by using the *Contact* form at the bottom of the page at *JimmyBrown.com* (making sure you enter your email address correctly). I will personally reply back to you, usually within 24 hours (excluding holidays or weekends).

Other Connections

- Social media (personal page): www.Facebook.com/thejimmydbrown/
- Daily devotions: www.FinishLineFaith.com or www.Facebook.com/FinishLineFaith/
- Travel / mission vlog (with my wife, Paula): www.TheMissionAmerica.com

*If this training has been helpful to you, please reach out and let me know.
And please pass this document on to other people who may, by the grace of God, be helped too.*