

FROM MEETING TO MISSION

a primer for forming gospel-centered
missional communities



SATURATE
RESOURCES

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Before You Begin | A Few Things of Note

HOW DO WE USE THIS PRIMER?

Welcome to From Meeting to Mission: A Primer for Forming Gospel-Centered Missional Communities. This primer has been designed to guide you and a group of people through forming a Missional Community (or rebooting an existing MC) and together helping you to apply the information and obey God's words.

During the course of the next nine-to-ten weeks, the primer will be your guide as you look at Scripture, pray, discuss, debate, reflect, complete exercises, and make plans.

HOW BIG SHOULD THE GROUP BE?

We highly recommend working through the primer in a group. While there's no magic number or composition of the group, we suggest about six-to-twelve people.

WHAT'S THE FIRST STEP?

That's completely up to you! However, we do encourage three things:

1. Choose one meeting location and a group leader/facilitator.
2. Start each week's meeting with a meal: sharing food, drink, and stories.
3. Get to know one another relationally. Have two or three people tell their "story" each week (ten minutes each). For ideas on how to share your story, visit SaturateTheWorld.com/hero-of-my-story.

ARE THERE RULES?

Short answer? No . . . but it is helpful if everyone in the group can commit to:

1. Speak honestly. It's important to create a culture of freedom and fearlessness within the group so that as you're wrestling with difficult topics or heart issues, members are not afraid to admit struggles, fears, or victories or to share honest thoughts.
2. Remember love. Give and receive correction and encouragement in love (Eph. 4:16). This can be hard to give and even harder to receive, and that's OK. Just remember to be gentle with one another.
3. Show up! It's best if everyone in the group can commit to take part for all ten weeks. Life happens, so if you know you're going to miss a week or two, be sure to connect with your leader or facilitator (or another member of your group)

prior to the next meeting to discuss what you missed and share your own thoughts on that week's material.

4. Pray! Commit to pray for yourself and your group in the coming weeks. Pray that Jesus would go before you and open eyes and hearts. Pray to hear the Spirit as He speaks and guides. Pray for courage, conviction, and power.
5. What about the kids? If there are kids in your group, decide how your group will care for them during your weekly discussion. (For example, will you partner with another MC to trade off caring for the other group's kids each week? Will you hire a babysitter(s)? Are they old enough to be included in each week's discussion?)

Week 1 | Gospel Basics

PAST (Saved from the Penalty of Sin)

In Colossians 1:6 the apostle Paul tells the Colossian church that the gospel they have "heard and understood" has been "bearing fruit in them since the first day it came to

them.” Paul also mentions this same gospel “is bearing fruit in the whole world!” He makes it clear that the gospel of Jesus is a message that brings about continual change, both in our lives personally and in the world around us. But the question we must ask is, What is this gospel that changes our world and us?

Before we can even think about being on mission, we need to build a solid gospel foundation. The gospel is the good and true news that Jesus has defeated Satan, sin, and death through His life, death, and resurrection, making all things new—even us. The gospel is for all of life, and our dependence on it is necessary as we continue to grow into Christlikeness.

As you go through these first three weeks of the Missional Community Primer examining the past, present, and future aspects of the gospel, carefully and prayerfully walk through each statement and corresponding passages. Be sure to use your Bible, a journal, your small group/Missional Community, and someone else to help you dig deep into the truths of Jesus.

Stop at each point, reflect, and discuss the implications, challenges, and hopes each of these points gives.

I believe I have been saved from the penalty of sin. . . .

- I believe I was an enemy of God because of my sin and rebellion against Him, deserving His wrath. (Eph. 2:1–3; Rom. 1:18–22, 2:1–16; Col. 1:21)
- I believe Jesus is the Son of God who is fully God and fully man and that He lived His life fully submitted to God the Father. (Col. 2:9; John 1:1–18, 15:10, 4:34; Heb. 1:1–15; Rom. 9:5; Phil. 2:5–11)
- I believe Jesus died on the cross for my sins according to the Scriptures. (Matt. 20:28; 1 Thess. 5:10; John 1:29, 10:17–18; 2 Cor. 5:21; Acts 2:21)
- I believe Jesus rose again on the third day and appeared to many people. (Luke 24; Acts 26:12–18; 1 Cor. 15; John 20–21; Acts 10:40)
- I believe Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father and sent His Spirit to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. (Acts 1:1–11, 2:1–4; Heb. 1:3, 2:8–18, 8:1–2, 9–10; Rom. 8; Eph. 1:20–23; John 14:16–17)
- I believe the Holy Spirit has made me alive in Christ, and I am now no longer condemned but am now a new creation loved by God as Father, submitted to Jesus as Lord, and sent and empowered by the Spirit for His mission of making disciples. (2 Cor. 5:17; Jeremiah 31:33; Ezek. 36:26–27; Eph. 2, 3:16; Acts 2:1–4, 6:5; 2 Tim. 1:7–8; Romans 8; 1 Cor. 12; Joel 2:28–29)

Discussion Questions

1. Being referred to as someone who is sinful and rebellious and in need of saving is offensive. How does this challenge/offend you as you think through your own life?
2. What adjectives would you use to describe Jesus' life, death, burial, and resurrection? Make a list and compare it with the other people in your group. What adjectives are similar? How are they appearing or not appearing in your day-to-day life?
3. It is incredibly freeing to know we have been saved from the penalty that sin and rebellion causes. Read Romans 6:15–23. How does your concept of freedom become redefined?

WEEK 2 | GOSPEL BASICS

PRESENT (Saved from the Power of Sin)

Stop at each point, reflect, and discuss the implications, challenges, and hopes each of these points gives.

I believe I am being saved from the power of sin. . . .

- I believe that though I was born into sin because of our earthly father, Adam, I have been born again by the Spirit and given a new heart with new passions and

new desires. (Ezek. 3:7; Eph. 2:1; Rom. 5:12–14, 7:13–14; Ezek. 36:26; Isaiah 57:15; Jer. 24:7, 31:33; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 2:20; Tit. 3:5)

- I believe that the Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead now lives in me, and I have access to that same resurrection power to overcome sin and Satan today. (1 Peter 3:18; Phil. 3:10; Eph. 3:16–18; Rom. 8, 13)
- I believe I am part of a new community, the church, and it is God’s will that I be sanctified—set apart to do his will. (Acts 2:44–47; Romans 12, 14; Eph. 4; 1 Thess. 4; 1 Peter 2; 2 Tim. 2:21)
- I desire to obey God and continue to grow into becoming more like Jesus and accomplishing his mission. (2 Cor. 3:18; Acts 5:29; Matt. 28:16–20)
- I believe I have all I need to make this a reality: His Spirit, His word, and His church. I intend to steward all of this for His glory. (2 Peter 1:3; 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Tim. 3:16; Eph. 1)

Discussion Questions

1. You have been given a new heart with new passions and new desires and adopted into the family of God through Christ. How do these new passions and desires play out in the every day? What confidence does your “adoption” give you for the present? What impact does your identity in Christ have in your life?
2. If you are a believer, Christ has poured out his Spirit and is now dwelling within you. What encouragement does that give you for growing into Christlikeness and defeating sin here and now? Do you see this truth at work in your life?
3. How does your identity in Christ, as a child of God with new desires and passions and with His Spirit living in you, encourage you to defeat sin?

WEEK 3 | GOSPEL BASICS

FUTURE (Saved from the Presence of Sin)

Stop at each point, reflect, and discuss the implications, challenges, and hopes each of these points gives.

I believe I will be saved from the presence of sin. . . .

- I believe Jesus will one day return and will make an end to sin, suffering, evil, and brokenness. (Psalm 110:1; Mark 12:36; Rev. 21, 17:14; 1 Cor. 15:25–26)
- I believe there will be a new heaven and a new earth. (Rev. 21; 2 Peter 3:13; Isaiah 65:17)

- I believe He will judge the living and the dead, and all those who put their trust in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection will enjoy being in God's presence forever in the new heaven and new earth. (2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Peter 4:5; Rev. 20:13)
- I believe all those who trust in something or someone other than Jesus for their life and justification before God will be separated from God forever. (2 Thess. 1:9; Isaiah 33:14; Rev. 19–20; Matt. 25:41–46)
- I believe it is our job as the Church, therefore, to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for the salvation of souls and to display a foretaste of God's kingdom so people will hunger for it and put their faith in Jesus Christ. (Rom. 1:16; Mark 16:15; Matt. 28; 2 Cor. 2:14–16; 1 Peter 2:9–17)

Discussion Questions

1. What encouragement can we take from knowing Jesus is coming back?
2. How has your hope been in the future, rather than in the One who determines the future?
3. How does the future coming of Christ spur you on to display and declare the Gospel and the kingdom here and now?

Optional Add-In Week | Gospel Basics Review

Take this week to review all three gospel realities—past, present, and future—and then spend some time processing through the questions and exercises below.

Exercise

Be prepared to share your thoughts from this exercise with your MC.

- Read Mark 10:13–31.
- Read it again just to make sure you didn't miss anything!
- What do we learn from this passage about the reality of following Jesus?
- How is Jesus' teaching here different from your experiences with Christianity in America? Explain your answer.

Discussion Questions:

1. Reflect on your life throughout the last month or so. Are you struggling to rest in or believe a reality of the gospel (past, present, future)? If so, what impact is it having in your life?
2. Did you learn anything new reading the Mark 10 passage?
3. What new truths of the gospel have you learned throughout the past three weeks?
4. Looking back prior to the start of this primer, do you think you were putting your faith in the Gospel of Jesus? Explain.
5. Can you fully affirm the past, present, and future realities of the gospel? If not, what do you believe is preventing you?
6. If you believe the gospel, have you been obedient to celebrate God's work in your life through baptism? If so, when and where? If not, what is preventing you from being baptized?

WEEK 4 | GOSPEL IDENTITY

British philosopher Alan W. Watts once said, "Trying to define yourself is like trying to bite your own teeth." His point in making this statement was that we cannot and should not try to define ourselves, but rather we should just be who we are. Whether you think Watts is right or wrong, the fact of the matter is that human beings are constantly looking for a definition for themselves—for an identity. Typically we find our identity (fundamental self-worth, value, and happiness) in the people we belong to or affiliate with, the purpose or cause for which we are living, and the pursuit of the things we believe will provide us joy. This means we define ourselves by what we do, who we associate with, how we look, how much money we have, how our kids behave, the accomplishments we have or have not achieved, education, race, hobbies—the list could go on and on.

Think about the last time you had a conversation with someone for the first time.

The first thing usually exchanged, other than your name, is your occupation. Maybe you begin by saying that your name is John the accountant, Sue the stay-at-home mom, Kayla the nurse, Jay the construction worker, Laura the teacher, Paul the

unemployed guy, or Amy the barista. Regardless, we often derive our value and worth through our identity, rather than in our creator and sustainer.

What about you? From where do your fundamental self-worth, value, and happiness come? Jesus? Or is it your job, family, talent, possessions? How did you or will you respond when/if you lose a job, your kids misbehave, your marriage struggles, you get into debt, tragedy strikes, or a dear friend moves away? Are these things more important than Jesus? Does life rise and fall by successes or failures? If so, you have an identity crisis; you've forgotten that because of Jesus you are already rooted and grounded in your identity as a beloved son or daughter of God.

The truth is Jesus has freed us from the slavery of proving our own value and worth. In fact, He has not only freed us from this, but through His life, death, and resurrection, He has purchased back the identity we lost at the fall: God's image bearers and dearly loved children (Gen. 1:26–28). This was an identity God intended His children to have from the beginning, but we abandoned it to pursue our own interests as you will soon see below.

Reflection

Stop for a second and connect the dots.

- Fill in the blank: My name is _____, and I _____.
- What things in life do you find your value and worth in?
- When in life do you feel good about yourself?
- When in life do you feel negative about yourself?
- Have you experienced an "identity crisis" as described in the paragraph above? If so, what was the result of this identity crisis?

In chapters one and two, the book of Genesis tells us God created humanity in His own image and gave them the purpose of displaying His image and glory in all the earth. After the fall of man (Genesis 3), that image was broken, and the rest of the Old Testament is a story of humanity's "identity crisis." Instead of looking to God, they looked to themselves and foreign Gods to save themselves. But as we learned in the gospel, God is rescuing humanity through Jesus—promising to redeem and restore all that was broken during the fall. In Jesus, we have been given a new identity. This identity is true, is better, and can never be taken away from us. Consider the following verses:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." —2 Corinthians 5:17

“I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ that lives in me.” —Galatians 2:20

“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.” —1 Peter 2:9

Through these verses we see we’ve been made new in Christ, and these are just a few of the many places throughout the New Testament that speak of our new identity in Christ. Furthermore, when we look at identity across Scripture, we see three key descriptors of a disciple of Jesus that stand out. We call these three descriptors our gospel identity.

1. Family: We are sons and daughters of God our Father. We are no longer orphans; we have a people to belong to, a true and better family to share life with: the church. (Genesis 12:1–3; John 1:12–13; Romans 12:10–16; 1 John 4:7–21)

2. Servant: We are a people who belong to God for His work, no longer looking to serve ourselves but taking the posture of servants pursuing joy in serving as Christ served. (Matthew 20:25–28; 25:31–46; John 13:1–17; Philippians 2:5–11; 1 Peter 2:16)

3. Missionary: We are the sent ones of God, ministers of reconciliation. We have been given a new purpose and cause to live for: God’s glory in all the earth. (John 1:14; 14:12–27; 15:26–27; 16:7–15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; Colossians 1:27–29; 2 Corinthians 5:16–21)

You will spend the next few weeks with your Missional Community talking through what it means to live out this new identity as a family of servant missionaries. Much of what it means to be a Missional Community is to learn how to live out these gospel identities together through the everyday stuff of life. You will be asked to make a commitment to one another as to how you will be a family, how you will take the posture of servants, and how you will live as missionaries to our world. But before you move into your commitment we want you to take some time to explore and reflect upon your identity as a disciple of Jesus. Understanding who we are in Christ—a family of servant missionaries—should radically change the way we live!

Exercise

Be prepared to share your thoughts from this exercise with your MC.

- Look back to the reflection you completed earlier. Answer those questions again with your gospel identity in mind. See the difference?
- Read 2 Corinthians 5:14–21. How do you see the gospel identities of family, servant, and missionary in this passage? Compare it with the questions above about how to live out those identities.
- Spend some time reading through the family, servant, and missionary scriptures. Note what stands out.

- Think about next week, and with your group, talk through how things might look different going forward. Think about what you need prayer for in order for a heart change to occur. Which of this week's topics do you need to spend some additional time in God's Word learning?

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think it's important for Christians to understand their gospel identity?
2. What can happen when Christians don't live out of their gospel identity?
3. How does understanding our gospel identity help us live out our faith in all aspects of daily life?
4. What aspect of your new identity in Christ challenges you the most?
 - Family (We are children of God who care for one another as a family.)
 - Servant (We are servants of Jesus who serve Him by serving others.)
 - Missionary (We are sent ones empowered by the Spirit to show and share Jesus to others.)

WEEK 5 | EVERYDAY RHYTHMS

As you learned in the last few sessions the gospel of Jesus Christ is really great news! So far, we have learned that through Jesus we've been given a new life and a new purpose, as well as been adopted into a new family called the church. This week you will be focusing on understanding your family identity and committing to how you will be the church to one another. You might be thinking . . . why do we need to make a commitment to one another? Well, the truth is, the scriptures are clear that we need one another in a real and tangible way.

Without other Christians in our lives to encourage us and speak the truth to us on a regular basis, we will surely forget that our identity is in Christ. We will be tempted to live isolated lives and to become consumers of the culture and its messages. Rather, God designed us to display His image to the rest of the world by loving one another as we go out and live in the world.

The author of Hebrews speaks with urgency as He instructs first-century Christians to commit to one another in real and tangible ways as they lived on mission in their context.

"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." —Hebrews 10:24–25

In this instruction to the church we see four key elements that are often overlooked but are crucial if we are to live out of the familial identity Jesus obtained for us through His life, death, burial, and resurrection.

1. Consider how to stir up one another to love and good works. We need to make a plan and consider how we will help one another love Jesus and experience His love.
2. Meet together. Meeting together regularly is critical to being a family, and we must not neglect it but prioritize it.
3. Encourage one another. Satan is determined to discourage us and distract us, but through being a family we are a constant reminder to one another of God's goodness and faithfulness.

4. See the Day drawing near. As a community, we look forward with eager expectation for the day Jesus returns bringing the new heaven and the new earth and establishing His kingdom forever.

Whether you have or haven't experienced life together with God's family, we know this is who God has made us to be in Christ. The remainder of this section will be for you and your Missional Community to decide what you will do to begin truly living life as a family. We want to encourage you not to be afraid to commit to one another in specific ways this week. By stopping to "consider how to stir up one another to love and good works," you will bring grace to one another's lives.

Our Commitment to Our Missional Community

(Adapted from Saturate as well as Josh McPherson's "Gospel Community Starter Kit")

One of the most important things we can do is to establish everyday rhythms in our Missional Community. Rhythms create a structure by which we, as the body of Christ, can live as family with gospel intentionality. The great thing is that we all share these rhythms already. We don't have to add more to our lives—we need to just start doing them together.

This may seem daunting at first; however, generally these everyday rhythms can be broken down into six different and easy categories to think through. There are also a few questions to help process each category.

1. Eat — We eat roughly twenty-one times per week (three meals/day and seven days/week). Answer the following questions to think through how you will share some of those meals together.
 - a. What meals will you share with one another?
 - b. How will you invite others to the table with you?
 - c. How will you celebrate communion together?
2. Listen — Everybody is listening to something (i.e. radio, news, podcasts, etc.). The following questions are to help you think through how you will listen to God and others:
 - a. How will you commit to listening to God's Word and praying together?
 - b. How will you commit to taking time to listen to each other?
 - c. What would need to change in your group to build a regular rhythm of listening to God and to each other?
3. Story — People have stories that are waiting to be told. Jesus has the best story that centers redemption and restoration. These questions will help you think through growing in God's story.

- a. Does your group know the story of God? How will you commit to growing in learning the story of God?
 - b. Has everyone in your group shared their stories? If not, how will you make space to talk through your stories?
4. Bless — We as Christians have been blessed to be a blessing to others. These questions will help you think through the people God has placed in your lives to bless.
 - a. How will you intentionally share what you have with one another and those in need?
 - b. How will you bless those whom you are trying to be missional to?
 - c. How will blessing others affect your giving: financially, physically, emotionally, etc.?
5. Celebrate — Don't be boring Christians! Celebrate the good things God has done, and enjoy life together. The following questions will help you form a plan for celebrating regularly with your group.
 - a. What events/days can you gather to celebrate together this year?
 - b. What will your gatherings look like together and around what?
 - c. How will you engage in celebrating with the people group God is sending you to?
6. Recreate — Building rhythms into our lives to rest, create, play, etc., is a beautiful way for us to reflect God and how He worked and then rested after He worked. These next few questions will help you think through resting and creating.
 - a. What practical ways can you recreate together with your group?
 - b. How might you demonstrate God's creative beauty and restorative intent?
 - c. What fun ways can you invite non-Christians in to rest and create with them?

WEEK 6 | THE MISSION OF GOD

Consider this question for a second: What is the mission of God? Maybe another way of asking it would be to ask, What is God working to accomplish in the world? No seriously, go ahead and think about this for a second. Write your answer in the space below before going any farther.

The mission of God is . . .

The way we answer this question will ultimately form and shape the mission of our local church and your Missional Community. Therefore we want to make sure we're all working toward the same goal as God's family of servant missionaries. We also want to be careful and make sure we are about what God is about. The purpose of this week is to help one another understand the mission of God as the Bible teaches and to begin to explore where your group fits into this mission during this time in our city.

As we think about the mission of God, we want to do so with the whole of scripture in mind. We want to think about the Bible as one big story about God and what he is doing in the world. It could be said that the entire Bible can be summed up in four words: creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. God created man and woman in His image and gave them the command to be fruitful, multiply, subdue, and cultivate the earth. What we see in creation is God's desire to fill the earth with His image and glory (Genesis 1:26–31). You don't have to read much further into the story to see the fall. Adam and Eve chose to buy into the lie from Satan and pick creation over the Creator. They chose to disobey God's one command, and in doing so sin and death filled the earth rather than God's image and glory (Genesis 3). This is bad news for everyone.

But the story doesn't end as a tragedy; God showed His great love for His children and wrote an epic story of redemption. He promised to create a family He would use to bless the nations (Genesis 12:1–3) and a kingdom that will last forever (2 Samuel 7:12). He promised a savior who would bring rescue and salvation through His death and resurrection.

In Christ, He created a new family, His church, which He has empowered through His Spirit and is using to bring good news to the world (John 20:21, Matthew 28:18–20, Acts 1:8). And He has shared with us how the story will end—with a new heaven and a new earth, total restoration, and worshipers from every tribe, tongue, and nation filling the earth with God's image and glory.

This is the mission of God: redeeming and restoring a broken world full of sin by replacing it with His image and saturating the earth with His glory once again. He is doing this through His Church, by transforming His people in Christ and using them to bring renewal to cities and the world by making disciples that make disciples. God's mission won't stop until the earth is filled with the knowledge of His glory (Habakkuk 2:14). What a beautiful day that will be!

Now that we have defined the mission of God, we want to take a second to try and understand it. We want to be a family that understands mission is an ancient work, and

we want to approach mission reactively and proactively. We believe the following teachings are critical for the church! Would you pause for a second and pray that God would open your minds and hearts as you read and prepare to discuss the remainder of this section with your Missional Community this week? Ask God to use the truth in these teachings to empower your Missional Community in ministry!

Reflection

Stop for a second and connect the dots.

- What is God working to accomplish in the world?
- How is He accomplishing this? Read Matthew 28:18–20, Acts 1:8, John 20:21, and Matthew 24:14.
- In your opinion, what does it mean to be sent by Jesus to make disciples?

Ancient Work | Understanding the Mission of God

From the moment Adam and Eve sinned against God in the garden, it could be said that God's missionary work began. It started when He pursued Adam and Eve in the garden and provided them with clothes to cover their shame. It continued through a promise to an old man named Abraham, that God would bless all nations through him. God then sent His son, Jesus, into the world to offer salvation to all through His life, death, burial, and resurrection. God then poured out His Spirit into His people and is now dwelling in their hearts.

God's commitment to His glory in all the earth is the foundation of our understanding mission. What we must first realize and digest is that mission is God's work, and it is an ancient work. We must be certain God is committed to accomplishing His purposes, and He will do it!

The enemy wants to make mission feel weighty to us. He wants us to feel burdened and overwhelmed by the task of making disciples who make disciples. Are you familiar with this feeling? There is no way YOU can do it. But God, on the other hand, has promised from the beginning of time that He will accomplish His purpose of uniting all things to Him. He is doing it and will complete it (Eph. 1:10)!

We must learn and believe that mission is not up to us. It is something God has been doing throughout redemptive history and is simply calling us into. Mission is more about our obedience as disciples than our production of disciples. We must value missional obedience more than we value missional activity. This means sometimes we will labor and see no fruit—but that is OK because God values our obedience as an act of faith (Hebrews 11–12:2). Other times we will be thrown into a harvest immediately—and we'll rejoice because we know God has been doing something great and we got to share a small part in it. When we view mission as an ancient work

of God, rather than a new work of man, it isn't burdensome or overwhelming to us. Instead, mission becomes about journeying with God, enjoying God, and partnering with God in His work to redeem and restore brokenness—and that is beautiful!

Reactive and Proactive | Understanding The Mission of God

Not only is it important to understand that we are joining God in an ancient work, but we must also understand that our missional activity is dependent upon the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the book of Acts and the Epistles we see the Holy Spirit acting as the guide, compass, and fuel—empowering, leading, and directing the church into the mission of God. The leading and directing of the Holy Spirit is a “reactive” and “proactive” mission.

Reactive mission can be defined as being on mission in the unplanned and unexpected moments of everyday life. This would include the opportunity for conversations that the Spirit provides during your lunch break at work, in line at the grocery store, at the park while your kids play, or with a neighbor while working in your yard. We have little control over these unplanned moments of life, so it's critical we are walking in the Spirit, listening and looking for His lead. It's all too easy to become busy, consumed with our own lives, and miss the opportunities the Spirit gives us to be on mission in the everyday stuff of life.

On the other hand, proactive mission can be defined as being on mission by prayerful and careful design. This means intentionally shaping the controllable aspects of life (spare time, weekends, hobbies, where we live and work, meals we eat, celebrations, vacations, how we spend our money, where we shop, etc.) around a specific mission.

Proactive mission is best carried out with a team committed to God, one another, and disciple-making. Together this team, or “family,” will look for ways to organize their collective lives so the gospel is displayed through their lives. This involves sacrifice, but remember: The Holy Spirit is equipping and sanctifying you as you move out into the world on God's mission. Whatever God has done to you, He wants to do through you. Christ is the Great King who humbled Himself to serve us and is calling us to go and serve others in the same way!

Consider for a second the disciple-making movement that explodes in the book of Acts. We see both reactive and proactive mission working together and leading to fruitful ministry. In Acts 1:8, we see mission by design: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” The plan is in place—receive the Holy Spirit, begin in Jerusalem, and then move outward from there with the gospel. But as you keep reading the book of Acts you see persecution and other unexpected events that develop along the way. It might seem as if the plan is falling apart, but we know the Spirit is constantly leading, guiding, and fueling the church. The disciples are forced to become reactive missionaries following the leading

of the Spirit in the moment, yet always looking to reorient their lives together around disciple-making (proactive mission). We can also point to the numerous examples in the Epistles where we see Paul stating his plan and strategy for mission but always being open to the possibility of the Spirit opening new doors of ministry (see 1 Corinthians 16:6–9 for one example).

The key is to look for where God is opening opportunities to develop reactive mission into proactive mission. This could be as simple as your Missional Community committing to eating weekly and tipping generously at a specific restaurant because one person in the group recently had the opportunity to share the gospel with a waitress while eating there. It could also be as complex as planting a new Missional Community in an apartment complex because the Spirit is constantly leading a group member into gospel conversations there. Either way, the only way we will have success in reaching the lost around us is if we are looking to the Spirit to lead us, guide us, and fuel us in both reactive and proactive mission.

Exercise

Be prepared to share your thoughts from this exercise with your MC.

- Read Acts 8:26–40.
- How does Philip experience God’s “ancient work” in this passage?
- Is Philip a proactive or reactive missionary in this example? Explain.

Discussion Questions and Notes

1. Are you most comfortable with “reactive” or “proactive” style of mission? Explain.
2. What about joining God on mission in our city is exciting to you?
3. What about joining God on mission in our city is scary to you?
4. Why is it important that we do mission together as a family and not as “lone rangers”?
5. Did you glean any new insights or aha moments from reading the Acts passage?

WEEK 7 | COMMITMENT TO MISSION

Just as you made a commitment in week five as to how you'll truly live as family in the everyday rhythms of life, this week your Missional Community will decide how it will specifically live on mission together. Your individual and collective gospel identity as family, servants, and missionaries is empowered by the Spirit to share that very same gospel.

The remainder of this guide encourages you and your Missional Community to consider prayerfully the role you play in the mission of God. Don't be hasty making a missional commitment; pray, discuss, argue, disagree, and pray some more until God makes it clear where He wants you to focus your ministry. The questions below are designed to help discern what mission (neighborhood or network of people) God is leading you to.

The Mission Jesus is Calling Us To

*If the answer to some of these questions is no, that is OK. Just move on to the next question.

Discerning where God is asking our MC to join His work:

1. Are there any neighborhoods or networks of people near where God has placed us and is already using us to make disciples?

- a. If yes, share a story with the group of how God has been using you to share the gospel and make disciples among these people.
 - b. If no, what neighborhoods or networks are you a part of that you could start living with gospel intentionality?
2. Are there any neighborhoods or networks of people where God has given you friends who are open to you and trust you?
 - a. If yes, share with the group about your experiences.
3. Is there a neighborhood or network of people God has burdened your heart for?
 - a. If yes, why do you love this place/people? Why is your heart burdened for this place/people?
 - b. If no, take the next few minutes/hours/days/etc. to ask God what neighborhood or network of people God is leading you to.

Neighborhoods or networks of people we've discussed (write below)

-
-
-
-

4. What would it look like for this family to join together on mission in one of these places? Begin to dream and discuss some of the things you could do to display and declare the gospel in each neighborhood or network.
5. Which neighborhood or network would be most receptive to our parties?
6. Which neighborhood or network provides us with tangible ways in which we can serve and bless?

Neighborhoods or people we're getting excited about (write below)

-
-
-

7. What is the first thing we would do in the neighborhoods or networks above to begin making disciples? Thinking about your next step might help you decide where God is sending you.

8. Where do you see dark areas that need the good news of the gospel to bear light? What would that look like in those neighborhoods or networks?

Hopefully the Spirit is opening your eyes to where He wants to use you, and you are getting closer to making your missional commitment.

If your group is still uncertain as to where God is calling you, spend some time praying for each place. We would encourage you to take your time here and discern where God wants you to focus your efforts. Remember, we are always on mission, but this is where you will collectively be on mission together. If you need to take a week to pray, do so. Possibly schedule a prayer walk or a hangout at each place asking God to lead, guide, and clarify where He is calling your group. When you are ready, move forward to the missional commitment. But don't wait too long; the longer you go without a committed mission, the more likely it will be you don't commit to one. Weeks and months can pass, and that is what the enemy wants. So set a date.

Lastly, be flexible! If your group does not feel called to any one specific mission, just pick something and try it. Join one of your MC members and serve alongside something he or she is doing. Commit to a short-term project (yard clean-up, neighborhood park restoration, a bi-weekly BBQ, etc.). If only one person in the group feels really strongly about a certain people group, neighborhood, school, etc., and everyone else feels they can join in, maybe that is a way to identify the mission. Let the Spirit lead you!

Our Missional Commitment

Our Missional Community is committed to joining God at work by seeking to make disciples in the _____ neighborhood or _____ network of people.

We are committed to living out our identity (a family of servant missionaries) through everyday rhythms (knowing God's story and others' stories, listening, blessing, eating, celebrating, resting, and working) among the people where God is sending us. We will engage people with the Gospel of Jesus through building friendships and displaying and declaring the good news of Jesus.

We are committed to meeting people where they are and prayerfully seeking God's wisdom on how we can take part in the discipleship process. We are joining Jesus in places He and His Spirit are already at work.

As a follower of Jesus and a child of God, I commit with my Missional Community to live out my gospel identity and approach mission with patience, realizing we are joining God in His ancient work for His glory and our joy.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

WEEK 8 | MISSIONAL PLAN

This week we'll be brainstorming a proactive plan for the next three months. As you chart your plan, it might be helpful to think of mission as three distinct "seasons": cultivating, sowing, and harvesting.

Cultivating:

Cultivating (or plowing) is the part of the discipleship process where we are praying for our focus area, making friends, learning their stories, and finding people in our Missional Community's focus area. Key activities during this season: praying for people by name, prayer walking in our focus area, building relationships, throwing parties to meet people, and including our new friends with the family. During the season of cultivating, a Missional Community should spend less time in the living room and more time out making friends and building relationships.

Sowing:

Sowing is the season where we begin to share our lives with the people we have connected with and sow "gospel seeds." Key activities during this season: sharing the gospel in conversations and through everyday rhythms, inviting friends into the life and gatherings of church family, deepening relationships and trust, and fervently praying for friends by name.

Harvesting:

Harvesting is the season where we see our friends come to believe in Christ and trust in Him for salvation and life. Key activities during this season: sharing the truth of the scripture, praying with our friends, serving others with our friends, encouraging faith decisions, and calling our friends to believe.

In each section below, think through what you can realistically accomplish in thirty days, sixty days, and ninety days. Then come back to your plan at the ninety-day mark,

assess how it's going, adjust, and create a plan for the next nine months. Be specific and practical with your plan, but don't be afraid to dream big. Maybe include one or two goals that seem too big to possibly be achieved—so you can stand back and praise God, "Wow! Look what God did!" In addition, plan to make this assessment rhythm a regular part of your MC and evaluate the health and direction of your mission every six months to a year. (For extra help assessing the health of your mission, refer to [Seasons of Mission: An MC Assessment for Determining the Health of Your Mission](#). {LINK})

Our Mission is:

Season of Mission we are in:

Friends we are praying for:

30 DAYS:

Everyday Rhythms | Bringing gospel intentionality to things we are already doing to reach the lost!

How we will eat:

How we will listen (to God and others):

How we will share our stories:

How we will bless:

How we will celebrate:

How we will recreate:

60 DAYS:

Everyday Rhythms | Bringing gospel intentionality to things we are already doing to reach the lost!

How we will eat:

How we will listen (to God and others):

How we will share our stories:

How we will bless:

How we will celebrate:

How we will recreate:

90 DAYS:

Everyday Rhythms | Bringing gospel intentionality to things we are already doing to reach the lost!

How we will eat:

How we will listen (to God and others):

How we will share our stories:

How we will bless:

How we will celebrate:

How we will recreate:

WEEK 9 | NEXT STEPS

Now that you've completed this Missional Community Primer together and are experiencing excitement about the things your group has committed to and planned for, it's time to celebrate! Gather your MC and throw a party!

May God use your commitment to one another and your new collective mission to move your group from being a weekly meeting in a living room to a family of servant missionaries sent on mission by God as disciples that make disciples.

A note of caution.

Satan hates nothing more than a group of individuals fired up about sharing the gospel. Expect bumps along the way; do not be surprised by the "fiery trials" (1Peter 4:12). When they occur, pause, come together, pray, reflect, listen, and trust. Satan will try anything he can to erode your enthusiasm, tear apart your MC, or make your mission seem ineffective. Don't believe his lies. Jesus is ALWAYS at work, in both the sacred and profane.

Jesus changes everything, and as we follow him we are changed too, along with the people we're ministering to in our neighborhoods and communities. He gave us His Word, His Spirit, and His church and invited us to experience abundant life as we make disciples. Together you have responded to the call to follow Him on His mission; therefore what's next for you is exciting—God wants to use your Missional Community to bring renewal to your city. Enjoy it! Enjoy the gospel, enjoy community, and enjoy mission!

A Final Word.

Keep this booklet and come back to it often as a Missional Community to remind one another of your true identities, how the gospel applies to the everyday stuff of life, and the purposes of God, and discuss where you are in the seasons of mission.

Additionally, as new people come into your family, use the exercises, reflections, and teachings throughout this booklet as a tool to disciple one another and share the vision and mission of your MC.