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Intentional Living

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Intentional Living

Abstract

"The great commission cannot just be a choice for us to consider; rather, it is a command for us to obey."

Posting about bringing Christ to our relationships from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/intentional-living/>

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Comments

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Intentional Living

 inallthings.org/intentional-living/

Alex Geleynse

| *Jesus wept. John 11:35*

The heart of our Savior and Lord Jesus is fully depicted within these words. He actively enters into our world, inviting us to share in a rich and formative journey. In his divinity, he knows how many hairs are on our heads; yet, in his humanity he has experienced the pain of having his hair pulled. In his divinity he has conquered death! Yet, in his humanity, he mourned with Mary and Martha after the death of their brother. Jesus chose to leave his throne with a goal in mind: establish an intimate and loving relationship.

A “God in tears” compels me to cultivate deep relationships and put the way of Jesus into practice. It is his expression of perfect love choosing to enter into our suffering that compels my heart to sing! Mark Scandrette writes, “It is the context of these interdependent relationships where transformation takes place.” It is only through entering into someone’s struggle that a burden can be lifted, sharing in one’s joy that encouragement can be found, and listening to one’s testimony that a helping hand can be offered.

“In the context of relationship, truth can be transferred from one life to the next. Questions can be asked. Real-life stories can be shared. Sin can be confessed. Accountability can be offered. Encouragement can be given. This describes how Jesus made disciples. The ministry of Jesus makes it clear that disciple making is a relational process built on trust.” – Bobby Harrington

Relationships present an opportunity and avenue for discipleship to take place. In fact, it is only in the spaces created for intimate relationship that discipleship happens, as modeled in Jesus’ relationships with his disciples.

Discipleship aims to teach, necessitates love, and requires that we walk with people through the next step in their journey to be like Jesus. Matthew 28:19-20 states, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

This passage opens with two imperatives: “go” and “make.” Jesus is commanding us to be intentional, deliberate, and purposeful in our relationships. We can only follow Jesus’ teaching in this passage if we are the ones who choose to go, who choose to bring Christ to the lost, who choose to be Jesus to a broken world, and who choose to make this type of relational investment. The great commission cannot just be a choice for us to consider; rather, it is a command for us to obey.

The word disciple refers to a student or apprentice. Disciples in Jesus’ day would follow their rabbi (teacher) wherever he went, learning from the rabbi’s teaching and being trained to do as the rabbi did. Basically, a disciple is a follower. Becoming a disciple of Jesus is as simple as obeying His call to follow. We are called to take this command literally. Luke 14:27 reminds us of this truth: “Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” 2 Timothy 2:2 reminds us of our command to teach others to make disciples: “And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Teaching within our discipleship relationship is necessary, which Scripture points out. We are entrusted with this duty of teaching, commissioned to “bear much fruit, showing ourselves to be his disciples” (John 15:8).

A small group of twelve men responded to a life-altering invitation: “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” ¹

In the days that followed, they watched Jesus, listened to him speak in parables, and learned from him how to love, teach, and serve others in the same way that he did. They lived in authentic, genuine, and intentional relationships with Jesus. Then came a moment when they saw him die on a cross for their sins, only to see him rise again after three days. Soon thereafter, he gathered them on a mountainside and entrusted them with a command, appointing them to live in bold relationship, making disciples of all nations. His commission would be their consuming ambition. Throughout their journey, they experienced suffering, sacrifice, obedience, persecution, and untold trials; nonetheless, they experienced unimaginable joy as they partnered with Jesus in the advancement of his kingdom and the spread of his gospel.

David Platt says it perfectly:

“I long to be part of a movement like that. I want to be part of a people who really believe that we have the Spirit of God in each of us for the spread of the gospel through all of us. I want to be part of a people who are gladly sacrificing the pleasures, pursuits, and possessions of this world because we are living for treasure in the world to come. I want to be part of a people who are forsaking every earthly ambition in favor of one eternal aspiration: to see disciples made and churches multiplied from our houses to our communities to our cities to the nations.”

It is through relationship that this movement can take place, through intentional living that Jesus’ name can be proclaimed. God has brought me and my family to the community of Sioux Center, Iowa, and the campus of Dordt College to join in his movement here. His call has brought with it demanding obedience and sacrifice; however, it has reinvigorated my passions, my vision, and my heart. God has instilled within me a spirit of intentionality, of which I continue to investigate and learn more about each day. In my ministry with students, co-workers, and members of my new community, I choose to be intentional. I firmly believe it is only through shared story that we are able to live in shared relationship.

One way my wife and I felt called to intentionality was through prayer. Once a week, we gather with a small group of individuals and spend one hour in prayer and also invite one person to share their testimony. By faith, we are discovering together what it looks like to commune with and listen to our perfect Father. I do not know where the Lord will take us, but we await with eager anticipation to see and take part in what the Lord is asking us to do as disciples of Christ. By the grace of God, I have been able to cast out all the fears I had of being used by him, and I am ready to go forth in confidence and boldness knowing this truth: “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). Our God, our perfect Father, chose to enter this world and grant us the power of his spirit. It is by this that we know our God actively draws near; He has intentions of walking and partnering with us in our humanness – our brokenness. I intend to do the same for others.

Footnotes

1. Matthew 4:19 ↩