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First paperback edition 2023

Staying on trail...

Recently, I hiked up Mount Baldy with a couple other men. Since I had not been hiking in a while, and had never been on this particular trail, I went on-line and looked up the trails that lead to the summit. I watched YouTube videos by others who had successfully made the trek. Since it was going to be an all-day, over 10-mile journey with a 4,000-foot elevation change going up and then again coming down, I wanted to be clear in my head where we were going. One wrong turn could cost us hours, injury, dehydration or even loss of life! Calling for an emergency airlift was not part of the plan!

At one critical point, as we were making a trail change to begin the ascent to the summit, I remembered something I had seen on the videos and had marked on my hiking guide. We stopped, got our bearings, and avoided a significant mistake. We made the summit shortly after noon, ate our lunches, and took some great pictures! Then, we began our descent feeling very satisfied to have reached our goal.

On the way back down, on a different trail than we took up, we faced several challenges. Our legs were giving out and our water was almost gone. It was nearing 90 degrees in the shade. It was a good thing we had read the hiker's guide about how much water to take! Every time we thought we were close to the cars, the next ridge and switchback with more trail would appear. Even though we had never been that way before, because we had a hiker's guide, we knew to persevere and that eventually we would be back at the parking lot, satisfied and joyful over our successful adventure.

Pastor Dan Stipp
Lake Gregory Church

HIKER'S GUIDE

NEXT STEPS FOR THOSE ON A JOURNEY WITH JESUS

Beginning a journey with God at the center of your life is an adventure!

The living God has expressed His desire to begin and continue in a relationship restored with you! He has made this possible through His Son, Jesus. He continues to make this possible by His presence and leadership in your life. He also provides people to come alongside you to see more clearly the way with Him. Welcome to the adventure!

Being on a journey with God is also a process. This is not a weekend trip, but an every day journey that we take with Jesus into our relationships, responsibilities and life experiences. God not only wants to restore your relationship with Him, but He also wants to bring restoration to every aspect of your life and relationships with others. It is as we understand and cooperate with this process that we can experience a greater wholeness in ourselves and a greater satisfaction in life as we fulfill our part in God's good purposes.

Consider this "Hiker's Guide" as a way to help you as a "Hiker" make healthy progress along the way with Jesus and avoid some of the common mistakes other "Hikers" make. We also hope you will take up our offer of a "Trail Guide", a person in our Church family familiar with the journey to come alongside you to help you get started.

Our prayer for you!

Our prayer is that this "Hiker's Guide" will help you navigate the way with Jesus and others through the unique challenges and opportunities of your life journey. He is our leader and He knows the way! We also hope that you will connect with one of our Church's "Trail Guides" to help you stay encouraged along the way. May this resource, along with periodic coaching, simply be a tool that helps you hear His voice, see His way, and enjoy the journey with Him.

WHAT THIS HIKER'S GUIDE CONTAINS

This guide does not replace the road map God has given us in the Bible. This is a supplement that brings clarity to some of the most important things that will be helpful to getting started and staying on the way with Jesus.

Each section of this guide describes a “Point of Interest”—a destination on the journey that we believe God wants you to experience. These focuses will be highlighted at the beginning of each section. The seven “Points of Interest” are...

BAPTISM WORSHIP
CONNECTION GROWTH
SERVICE GENEROSITY
MULTIPLICATION

For each “Point of Interest”, some key guidance will be shared for three areas of your life. These are places to stop on the trail, read the “Point of Interest Information Sign”, take a “drink”, “sit down” and reflect. The goal is that your pause on these things will help you apply what you are learning. You will recognize them by the following symbols:



Head - Things you need to *Know*



Heart - Things God wants you to *Be*



Hands - Things God wants you to *Do*

The ultimate goal of this “Hiker’s Guide” and the coaching from a “Trail Guide” is that you will be more fully integrated into the way with Jesus and life shared with the Lake Gregory Church family. Welcome to the “trail head”! Let’s begin the hike!

POINT OF INTEREST #1

BAPTISM



KNOW:

The trail head of this new journey through life begins with entrusting ourselves back to God through believing in His Son, Jesus.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

John 3:16

"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life." 1 John 5:11-12

The Bible teaches that believing is trust (an inner conviction of something true) that results in actions consistent with what we believe.

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see... And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." Hebrews 11:1,6

That trust is symbolized in our following Jesus' command to be baptized (immersed in water). This baptism symbolizes our "death" to our old way of living (self-centered, selfish without God and going our own way) and our resurrection with Jesus to a "new life" with Him at the center and leading the way.

"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

Romans 6:3-4



BE:

Reflect and talk with God, and later your Trail Guide, about your relationship with Jesus.

- ◆ *Do you believe that He is the Son of God sent into this world to save you from selfish sins and set you on a life-giving way with God?*
- ◆ *What would a changed heart mean for you? A changed life?*
- ◆ *What are the things that might keep you from entrusting your life to the God who made you right now?*
- ◆ *Do you believe that these hindrances are greater than forgiveness from God and a restored life with Him?*
- ◆ *What questions do you still have about entrusting your life to Jesus Christ?*

Pray a sincere, seeking prayer with your Trail Guide or alone as soon as you can, asking Jesus to forgive you, change your heart, come into your life, and lead you in His way.



DO:

Talk with your Trail Guide or Pastor about a time to be baptized. If you have entrusted your life to Jesus Christ, then baptism in water symbolizes your union with Him and the new life He has given you. Plan to take that step at the beginning of your journey or as soon as you realize that He wants you to. Remember these words of Jesus.

*"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" **Matthew 28:19***

Jesus was baptized, He commanded His followers to be baptized, in the book of Acts it records that all who believed in Jesus were baptized. If you believe, you should too!

"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

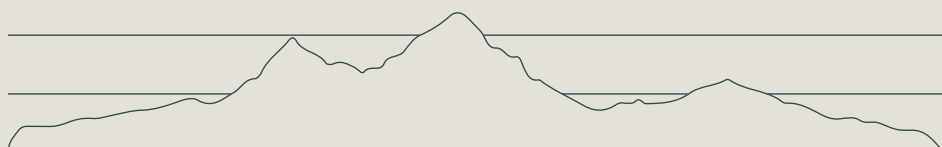
Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

*With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day." **Acts 2:36-41***

Billions of people have entrusted their life to Jesus and symbolized their trust in Him by being baptized. This "trail head" "point of interest" is about you becoming a part of God's family and being unashamed to follow Him with your life.

The second point of interest highlights the single most important relationship that is now restored in your life. You are now reconnected with God and have free access to worship and relate with Him.

FIELD NOTES



POINT OF INTEREST #2

WORSHIP



KNOW:

Most people think worship is singing songs about or to God. That can be a part of worship, but true worship is something so much larger! It is about your whole life being lived with God at the center.

*"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.." **Romans 12:1-2***

Jesus was traveling through an area where there were people called "Samaritans". Jews and Samaritans didn't associate hardly at all, and there was a lot of confusion between them about worshipping God.

More than that, Jesus rested by a well outside one of their cities and asked a woman for a drink of water from the well. She was shocked because not only was she a Samaritan, but also because she was a woman, and that wasn't really accepted in their culture either! (You can read this full story in John 4:1-42)

After Jesus offered her a drink that would truly satisfy her soul, she tried to argue with him about the right place to worship God. Jesus responded in a way to show her that God is more interested in our heart to worship than the place of worship.

*"Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." **John 4:21-24***

Because you now believe in Jesus Christ, God dwells in your heart by His Spirit.

"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.." Ephesians 1:13-14

"You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. 11And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God." Romans 8:9-14

You can live as a true worshiper of God, living your life to do His will and to please Him. You should be worshiping God by your obedience as much or more than your songs. Our life becomes an offering pleasing to God as we lift ourselves up to Him each day to be about His will.

*"This, then, is how you should pray:
"Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.." Matthew 6:9-10*

Gathering together with others (in a local expression of the Church) is also a part of how we obey and worship God. We will talk more about that in the next point of interest.



BE:

Talk with God and your Trail Guide about your heart in relationship with God.

- ◆ *What is your response to the idea of worshiping God by living your life to do His will and please Him?*
- ◆ *In what ways are you experiencing God's love for you? What does it look like to love Him back?*
- ◆ *What does worshiping look like when you're experiencing God's love? When you're anxious? When you're grieving? Angry? Depressed? (Choose the one that feels most relevant for you right now.)*



DO:

To help your heart be worshipful toward God, plan to spend a regular daily time with Him in the Bible and in prayer. As you listen to and read God's Word you can know better what His will is. (Romans 12:2; 1 John 5:14-15)

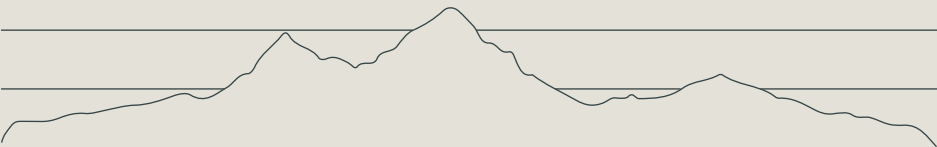
Pick a time that would most often give you at least 10-15 minutes of uninterrupted time to connect with Him in your heart. Maybe it would help to go for a walk and talk with God- or to stream some music that helps your heart focus on Him.

For me, making sure that I have a little focused time with God every morning when I get up and every evening before I go to sleep works best. I read through the Bible, reflect, worship and pray, then go into the day or off to sleep. Following the "ACTS" acronym can help... "Adore God, Confess sin, offer Thanks, Supplicate—that means pray and ask God for things. Regular time with God and living from the heart will keep you more clear-eyed and alert to how God wants you to live and relate to others.

The next "Point of Interest" will highlight why your relationship with others who know him is so important to having a great experience on this journey.

FIELD NOTES

Lined area for field notes.



POINT OF INTEREST #3

CONNECTION



KNOW:

*"For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully." **Romans 12:3-8***

The followers of Jesus quickly got the message that being a part of His good plan for people meant being in a good relationship with each other.

"But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

"Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house.

*"Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.." **Matthew 12:28-30***

*"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." **John 13:34-35***

Being restored to a relationship with God means that we are also in the family with all the others who have entrusted their lives to Him.

We are also interconnected with one another like different parts in one body. We have different gifts and abilities to serve, bless and build up one another. We can serve God's purposes better together than as isolated individuals.

*"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." **1 Corinthians 12:27***

God wants us to be unified in our hearts with one another.

*"As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." **Ephesians 4:1-6***

Jesus' longest recorded prayer is about us being one with Him and each other. (See John 17)

The Church, the local expression of the body of Christ, is God's plan for providing connection for everyone who comes into his family. And just like puzzle pieces must be interconnected in order for the picture portrayed by the puzzle to be seen, so we must be interconnected with each other in order for others to see Jesus more clearly.



BE:

Reflect on the Scriptures listed above. Talk with God and your Trail Guide about your connection with others who are seeking to follow Jesus Christ.

- ◆ *What difference would having this kind of connection mean for you?*
- ◆ *What challenges or concerns might be getting in the way of you connecting with a local church?*
- ◆ *What feels like the right next step for you?*

If you focus on the Church being about the people who make it up, it helps to see why God considers that connection so important. Have you ever had a bad experience with a Church? God wants to help you past that pain and into a healthy expression of His people. (Your Trail Guide will discuss with you Lake Gregory Church's "8 Heart Attitudes for Healthy Church Life." We are not perfect in these things, but we are committed to pursue being a healthy Church.)



DO:

If a pile of logs are interconnected and ignited, then they burn hot and bright. If a single log is pulled away from the fire and left on its own, does it burn well? We need each other to best fulfill God's plan in and through our lives.

Check out expressions of the Church in our community, but then commit to be a part! Every believer should be connected with other believers. Once you find a local Church that is healthy, then not only attend, but get involved! (If you sense God is leading you to be a part of this body during this season of your journey, your Trail Guide can help you with the process of becoming a member of Lake Gregory Church. We would consider it an honor to be connected with you!)

FIELD NOTES

Lined area for field notes.



POINT OF INTEREST #4

GROWTH



KNOW:

*"He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me." **Colossians 1:28-29***

*"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose." **Philippians 2:12-13***

*"I am writing to you, dear children,
because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.
I am writing to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.
I am writing to you, young men,
because you have overcome the evil one.
I write to you, dear children,
because you know the Father.
I write to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.
I write to you, young men,
because you are strong,
and the word of God lives in you,
and you have overcome the evil one." **1 John 2:12-14***

Living things grow. A seed gets planted in the ground. Once it germinates, it begins a process of growing, sprouting up through the ground and eventually into a mature plant. A person is conceived and, after 9 months of development inside their mother, they are born. They continue to develop throughout their lives to eventually become a mature adult.

This is true of our spiritual lives as well. We are born-again through believing in Jesus. (See John 3:3-8) Like newborn babies, at the beginning we need "milk", basic essential messages that will help us grow. (See 1 Peter 2:2) Eventually, we will be able to handle "solid food". (See Hebrews 5:14) Throughout our journey we grow in God's grace and in the knowledge of Him. (See 2 Peter 3:18)

God wants you to grow up and mature in a relationship with Him! (Hebrews 5:11-6:3) This growth will help you have greater understanding and wisdom. You will be able to see life and relationships more the way that God does. It will also be a protection for your heart and life, helping you to avoid being deceived away from the true path with Jesus.

A lesson from the bark beetle infestation...

The “phloem” is the inner layer of the bark carrying sap and its nutrition to various parts of a tree. The bark beetle wants to bore into a tree, beyond the defenses of its “phloem.” If enough are able to do so, it will eventually cripple or kill the tree, cutting off its life-giving flow. This tends to happen more so in drought conditions when there is not enough sap to stop the bark beetles.

When a tree is well hydrated from lots of moisture in the soil, its phloem is so full and creates enough pressure it keeps the bark beetles out. They aren’t able to significantly harm the tree because the tree has an internal barrier strong enough to resist their damage.

Think of your growth in relationship with Jesus Christ like keeping your life hydrated with true, living water! His Word is truth that will deter deceptive influences. And just like your body’s internal immune system needs health and hydration to keep your body healthy, immersing yourself in the truth of God’s word will keep you healthy and growing spiritually.





BE:

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." **Romans 12:2**

Reflect on your life habits and how much you are taking in the truth of God's message. Talk with your Trail Guide about where might be the best places in the Bible to read and reflect on to get to know God better and counter the influences of fallen culture on your heart and life.

- ◆ *Consider your current habits. What kind of growth can you expect based on your current habits?*
- ◆ *What seeds of growth would you like to plant? What weeds will you need to remove to make room for those seeds to thrive?*
- ◆ *How can you give God a more active role in renewing your mind (Romans 12:2) and re-parenting you to bring about better health to your inner life?*



DO:

Evaluate how much time you spend taking in the world's view rather than God's. Make some simple changes to your priorities. Get started in a regular time with God every day—in his message to us and in conversation with Him (prayers). Take a step back from social media or constant television viewing and get out in nature. Give yourself time to reflect on God's perspective on life's relationships and responsibilities. And, most importantly, start putting the truth He shows you into practice. Nothing will drive the message deeper into your heart and facilitate transformation more in your life than obeying God's truth. (See John 8:31-32; 14:15-17; 15:7-11)

FIELD NOTES

Lined area for field notes.



POINT OF INTEREST #5

SERVICE



KNOW:

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." **Matthew 5:14-16 (Also see Mark 10:42-45)**

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." **Ephesians 2:10**

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."

1 Peter 4:10

The Bible teaches that every person who believes has a part to play in God's epic adventure and His good purposes for people. We are created to serve God and bring value into the lives of others. It is the natural overflow of a life restored to God to want to do the good that He has intended us to do.

While we are not saved by doing good works and acts of service, serving evidences our faith in Jesus. (See James 2:14-26) Having a heart to serve others for their ultimate good reflects the heart of the One who served us for our ultimate good. (See Philippians 2:3-8) Jesus' willingness to serve us resulted in our being able to be forgiven and have a life restored to God.

To be able to serve well, we have to set selfishness aside—our self-centeredness, our agendas, our selfish wants. The good news is that doing so also sets us free to really live! Lorne Sanny, a former President of the Navigators once said, "The only doorway out of the dungeon of self is service to others." If you want to live well, then grow through serving others according to their needs from God's perspective.



BE:

Consider your motivations for serving or not serving. How many of those decisions are influenced by God's "inner nudge" towards something healthy for yourself and others, and how much comes from selfish ambition or vain conceit?

- ◆ *What happens inside of you when you think about serving?*
- ◆ *In what ways do you sense the holy spirit might be prompting you to serve? What would it look like to say "yes" to that prompting?*

Ask God to move in your heart and make it uncomfortable not to serve his purposes. Ask Him for the inner motivation and desire to get outside of yourself and serve others.



DO:

Sometimes the way to deal with selfishness is a simple choice to serve. Start at home with your most important relationships first. Take an honest look at how you live and consider how you can bless those in your family or circle of friends by serving them in some way. Talk with your Trail Guide about needs and opportunities to serve as a part of the Church. Consider your own gifts and abilities and think about your best ways to bring value into the lives of others. It is probably in a way that would also be life-giving to you!

MADE FOR PURPOSE

Everyone has a unique SHAPE for Serving God and the people around them. Many Churches have found that helping people discover their SHAPE for service helps them discern how best to serve God's purposes with their lives.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS: Every believer has been given one or more gifts by the Spirit of God to serve others. (See Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; 1 Peter 4:10) Discerning your spiritual gifting can help you know better how God wants to work through you.

HEART: Your heart is the cockpit of your life. (Proverbs 4:23) When your heart is restored to God through trusting in Jesus Christ, God gives you new, noble desires. He may put something on your heart to do because He wants to use you. (Matthew 15:18-19; Luke 6:45; Luke 8:15)

ABILITIES: Every person has natural abilities and transferable skills they have learned. Things you have an aptitude for and are good at may help you know how best to serve God's purposes. (Matthew 25:15; Acts 11:29)

PERSONALITY: Our souls are "hard-wired" in how we tend to perceive the world around us, process things, make decisions and are re-charged in relationships. Discerning your personality can help you know for what roles you are best suited. (Note: Each of the four gospel writers are different in their personality and the way they tell the message of Jesus.)

EXPERIENCES: Our stories are unique based on our backgrounds and experiences. Understanding our stories in light of God's bigger story can also help us discern how He may want to use our lives. (Read the personal stories of Jesus' followers in the New Testament.)

Ask about the Church's training resources for more help in discerning your SHAPE!

FIELD NOTES

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POINT OF INTEREST #6

GENEROSITY



KNOW:

"The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor." **Proverbs 22:9**

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work... You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God." **2 Corinthians 9:6-8,11**

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life." **1 Timothy 6:17-19**

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." **James 1:17**

There is a timeless principle about "sowing and reaping" referred to throughout the Bible. In it we learn that generosity begins with God who made all things and who gives us His generous gift of a life restored with Him. (Titus 3:3-8) Every good thing comes from Him.

As our hearts are touched by God and become more like His, we are freed up from our selfishness to be more gracious and generous with others. Out of the overflow of God's forgiveness and generosity with us, we can bless and refresh others around us.

Generosity is not just for the wealthy. The Bible teaches all of us, no matter what we have or don't have, to be His generous people. We aren't expected to give what we don't have, but we are expected to give in accordance with how God has blessed us. It is good for our hearts to give.

Our security is now found in our restored relationship with God. As we loosen our grip on the things of this world, and begin to use the things of this world to be a blessing to others around us, we identify more with the heart of Jesus who left everything to love and bless us. (Philippians 2:3-8)

Be generous as God enables you to and you will find that you are reaping more true blessing than you sow!



BE:

READ: Matthew 6:25-34

*"Trust in him at all times, you people;
pour out your hearts to him,
for God is our refuge." Psalm 62:8*

*"Honor the Lord with your wealth,
with the first fruits of all your crops;
then your barns will be filled to overflowing,
and your vats will brim over with new wine." Proverbs 3:9-10*

Ask God to help your heart to be set on Him as your security. He is your refuge and strength. Honor Him out of what He blesses you with. You do not have to fear not having enough if you have Him! Settle in your heart that God is the owner of everything, and you are just a manager of what He entrusts to you. Ask Him to show you how to be a good steward of those instruments and a blessing with them. Talk with your Trail Guide about what honoring the Lord out of what He gives you can look like. Ask them to share a blessing they have experienced by being generous. Maybe they have a generosity story that will encourage your faith!

- ◆ *Who is someone that was generous to you? What impact did their generosity have on you?*
- ◆ *What do you think are the characteristics of a generous heart?*
- ◆ *What steps would you like to take in the area of generosity?*



DO:

Once you know that God wants you to give and be generous, it is wise to discern what your next step toward being a generous person should look like.

Giving takes many different forms. Some generosity is in the form of disciplined, regular and systematic giving. Other acts of generosity are spontaneous. We are to be generous with our time, talents and treasures in whatever way God leads us.

Ask God to lead you in whatever next step He would want you to take. We believe God will meet you and help you with whatever step He puts on your heart. Your Trail Guide can give you suggestions or lessons they have learned about giving that may help.

My story of giving...

I do not have a special gift of giving like others I know. I certainly do not consider myself to be a stellar example of generosity. I am still learning what that is to look like in my life. However, I thank God for giving me parents that started me in the discipline of giving at age 5.

Most Christ followers find that tithing (giving the first 10% of their income to God) is a healthy goal and an example of the “floor of giving” expected of God’s people in the past. This is what my parents believed, practiced and taught their kids.

As a result, every time I have earned money throughout my life, I have given 10% through my local Church to God and His purposes. If I made \$5 mowing a yard, the next Sunday, I put 50 cents in the offering at my Church. I have continued that practice to this day. I can confidently confirm that I have never lacked anything that I have really needed, nor did my parents or my brother or sister.

Were there times that were scary financially? Absolutely!! I have more than once wondered whether I was going to make enough to pay all my bills. But, whenever I put honoring God first, keeping up my discipline of giving to God out of the first and best of what He gave me, He always showed Himself faithful. I can trust Him and so can you.

Take a step in the direction of obedience out of trust in God. He will meet you there.

FIELD NOTES

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal lines.



POINT OF INTEREST #7

MULTIPLICATION



KNOW:

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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.'" **Matthew 28:18-20**

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." **Acts 1:8**

"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others." **2 Timothy 2:2**

God's plan from before creation began is to prepare for himself a people from among all peoples. (See Ephesians 2:13-22; Titus 2:14) God is drawing people to a restored relationship with Him through the work of His Son, Jesus. (See John 5:24; 6:44)

Jesus' parting words to his disciples were about how He would work through them to help others experience the life He came to give. Those who come to know Jesus are his witnesses to others.

The movement of God to the hearts of more people happens as we make ourselves available to be used by him in our circle of relationships. We can share with others what Jesus is doing in us and that he desires to work in them too!

No one person can reach everyone on the planet. But as each of us does our part to help others know Jesus and His message of forgiveness and restoration, everyone will have the opportunity to hear and believe.



BE:

- ◆ *Who is the first person who comes to mind when you think about sharing your faith? Describe how you would feel if that person made a decision to follow Christ.*
- ◆ *What might be stopping you from being the witness you could be? What would overcoming it look like?*
- ◆ *What support or encouragement do you need in this area?*

Ask God to stir his passion for people in your heart. Follow Jesus' pattern and be a true friend to those around you starting with your family and friends. Be willing to be used by God however would be most helpful to others hearing about Christ, getting their questions answered, and having hope restored through trusting in him.



DO:

One step that every believer in Jesus can take is to invite people around their life to come to our gatherings on Sundays and hear the message. We are just like one beggar telling other beggars where to find bread.

If you have been truly touched by God's mercy and grace in your own life, you are going to want to share that with others around you. May you experience his joy as you let God work through you to help others in the most important one thing God desires for every person: To trust in Jesus, His Son. (See John 6:28-29; 1 Timothy 2:4-6)

HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL

Make it a conversation. Be personable. Share your story! You have been saved by Jesus, no one can deny how you have experienced Him, your testimony is valuable and unique; your life is proof of Jesus' power. In the same way, empathize with the non-believer who is in *need* of Jesus; you possess the truth they long for.

ASK them a question

ADMIRE their journey

ADMIT your need for Jesus

The acrostic below is a simple tool you can use to remember the gospel and share it efficiently. Use it as a conversational outline.

GOD created us to be with Him

OUR sins separate us from God

SINS cannot be removed by good deeds

PAYING the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again

EVERYONE who trusts in Him alone has eternal life

LIFE with Jesus starts now and lasts forever

If someone you talk to is ready to commit their life to Jesus, lead them in a prayer to receive salvation.

"Lord Jesus, I need you. Thank you for dying on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins. I ask forgiveness for my sins and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Thank you for giving me the gift of eternal life. I want to turn and live a new life with you as my Lord and Savior. Thank you, Jesus. Amen."

FIELD NOTES

Lined area for field notes.



We hope that this “Hiker’s Guide” has been helpful.
May God bless you as you take your next steps with
Jesus and with Lake Gregory Church.

Love and prayers,

Dan Stipp
Senior Pastor
Lake Gregory Church

