

MULTIPLY



MILE HIGH VINEYARD

Spring 2015

Dear Leaders,

Thank you so much for your willingness to lead a Multiply Life Circle! We are excited to see how this series can help us all get more comfortable in sharing our faith and hope in Jesus with those around us.

As you know, Multiply is a series based on the book of Acts and focuses on how we can reproduce the life we have with Jesus with others. And you, as a leader, have the opportunity to help those in your Life Circle apply these practices to their lives – as you guide them and, most importantly, as you set the example by doing the exercises and the homework yourself. *That will make all the difference.*

Here are a few helpful thoughts for you to consider as you lead your Multiply Life Circle.

- IN GENERAL

- **Be sure to catch the Sunday sermon each week** – Each week’s Life Circle material is meant to be work in conjunction with the previous Sunday’s sermon. If you (or anyone in your Circle) missed it, the podcast is typically available by Monday evening.
- **Review the week before** – Take some time to talk about the exercises and homework from the previous week. How did it go? Where did people win? Where did they struggle? *Remember – lead from example. Share how you’re doing with all of these things as well!*
- **Help everyone think “big picture”** – These ideas shouldn’t be processed in a vacuum. Help everyone to see how they all relate, work together and build off of each other.
- **Try to get most people to participate** - There is usually someone that wants to "over talk." Ask questions like: “Is there anyone else that would like to add something?” “What do you think about what they said?”
- **Strongly leverage your time/space together as a Circle** – Be sure to incorporate the other elements of a typical Life Circle (worship, ministry time, social time, etc.) because those are the real reasons people are really coming to your Circle. They can get the content; leverage the social/community time together.

- OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

- There are seven components included in each week’s notes:
 - **Key Concept** – theme of the week
 - **Watch** – link to that week’s video
 - **Read** – key verse for that week
 - **Notes from the Video** – exactly what it sounds like...with blanks to fill in
 - **Consider** – a few paragraphs that complement the theme
 - **Apply** – great questions for them to process on their own and for you to use for your discussion time together
 - **This Week** – one key thing (related to that week’s topic) for them to do over the course of the upcoming week

- Don't feel like you have to cover every aspect of the curriculum at every meeting. Each component is meant to be an aid for organic conversation. If you don't hit every "Apply" question or read the "Consider" passage together on a given week, that's totally fine! But, *do be sure to watch the video, process it a bit and encourage everyone to do the "This Week" homework.*
- In fact, we suggest taking time each week to discuss how everyone did with the previous week's "This Week" homework. And, don't forget, you're not only leading the group but also setting an example for the group how to process, risk and do each week's assignment. So, please be sure to do the assignments yourself!
- We encourage you to have your group watch the videos on their own and process the information before coming to your meeting. Then, together, watch the video again and give everyone a chance to respond to what they have been processing.
- GREAT QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING YOUR MEETING
 - In addition to the application questions included in each week's material, here are some great general questions you can use to stimulate conversation and discussion.
 - How was this for you?
 - What did you learn about yourself this week?
 - In the application questions, you were asked _____. Let's each share our answers out loud together.
 - In what ways are we sharing similar thoughts/responses? In what ways are we sharing different thoughts/responses?
 - Did you find last week's assigned homework difficult or easy? Why/why not?
 - What is one take-away for you from this week's discussion?
 - As you consider the things we've discussed today, how can we be praying for you? How can we pray for you now?

We're excited to see and hear all that God does in your life through this Multiply series. Thank you for being willing to do this. We are very grateful, and we're praying for your Circle.



Week 1: A Message That Must Be Proclaimed

Key Concept:

Making proclaiming Jesus a lifestyle

Watch:

<https://vimeo.com/119089474>

Read:

Acts 4:29-31 – “Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Notes from Video:

- A. The faith we have in Jesus
 - a. Demands that it be proclaimed.
 - b. Is uniquely historical.

- B. You know Jesus because someone told you about Him.

- C. Since we've been told about Jesus and found life in Him as a result, it demands that
 - a. We share about our faith and the life we have with Jesus.
 - b. We include people in this story that is making all things new again.

- D. If we believe that Jesus really offers a way to life, we have to learn how to be people who speak up and share the story of Jesus in a way that's
 - a. Winsome,
 - b. Connects to their hearts, and
 - c. Demonstrates that we truly love them and that we know that Jesus loves them and offers a life that is beyond the one that they're living.

Consider:

Behind closed doors we [my boss and I] talked for forty-five minutes. Well, to be honest, I did most of the talking. I was really nervous. Never having been trained in how to engage with others about my faith, I fumbled around and wasn't nearly as clear as I could have been. Still, in my own sincere by admittedly inept way, I tried to describe how I met Jesus and the difference he had made in my life.

An amazing thing happened. He didn't laugh. He didn't make fun of me. He didn't nervously try to change the topic or make excuses so he could leave the room. Instead, he listened intently. By the end, he was hanging on every word.

At the same time, I felt like I was going to burst on the inside. It instantly became clear to me that nothing was as urgent or exciting as what I was doing in this seemingly serendipitous conversation. It felt as if time were standing still, as if eternity were holding its breath.

I'm not sure how God used that conversation in my boss's life, but I do know this: he undeniably used it in mine. When I emerged from that office, I was thoroughly invigorated. It felt like the air was carbonated! There are no words to adequately describe the thrill I felt in having been used by God to communicate his message of hope to someone far from him.

This is what gets me up in the morning: the thought that somehow, in some way, God might take this seemingly routine day and surprise me with an opportunity to tell someone about the good news that has the power to turn their life inside out.

Lee Strobel and Mark Mittelberg, *The Unexpected Adventure*, pg 10-11, 17

Application:

1. Do you remember who first told you about Jesus? How did that affect you? What, if any, difference did it make in your life? What is it about Jesus that drew you to Him?
2. Are you comfortable sharing about your faith in Jesus with others? Why/Why not? What hesitations do you have, if any?
3. If you have shared about Jesus with others, what has been your experience? How have others responded?
4. While watching the video, what did you think or feel as you heard Penn ask, "How much do you have to hate somebody to *not* proselytize, to believe that everlasting life is possible and *not* tell them that?" Why was his statement so powerful?
5. Concerning the passage from *The Unexpected Adventure* above, can you relate to any part of the author's experience (being nervous, trying to be sincere, not having adequate words, being surprised by the other person's response, life change for yourself after sharing, etc.)? Share your thoughts with those around you.

This week:

Take a step out of your comfort zone, find somebody who you think is far from Jesus and simply say, "Jesus loves you." Share about Him and why you love Him. Then, ask them what they know and/or like about Jesus. Be ready to share about your experience next week.



Week 2: Praying for People Who Surround You

Key Concept:

Praying for people by name whom you want to see come to Jesus.

Watch:

<https://vimeo.com/119089476>

Read:

Acts 16:6-10 - Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Notes from Video:

- A. Prayer: the first step in sharing the life we have with Jesus with others

- B. Why we pray: We're in a spiritual fight.
 - a. When we speak of the life found in Jesus, we're involved in a spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:12).
 - b. Their minds are blinded and veiled to the light that's found in Jesus so they can't receive the truth of Jesus (2 Corinthians 4:4).

- C. When we pray:
 - a. God answers our prayers.
 - b. Miracles happen.

- D. How we pray:
 - a. For specific people by name.

- b. For insight into their hearts.
- c. For favor in others' lives to speak about the life that's found in Jesus.
- d. For God to demonstrate to them how much He loves them.

Consider:

"I saw a dark and stormy ocean. ... In that ocean I thought I saw myriads of poor human beings plunging and floating, shouting and shrieking, cursing and struggling and drowning; and as they cursed and screamed they rose and shrieked again, and then some sank to rise no more.

And I saw out of this dark angry ocean, a mighty rock that rose up with its summit towering high above the black clouds that overhung the stormy sea. And all around the base of this great rock, I saw a vast platform. Onto this platform, I saw with delight a number of the poor struggling, drowning wretches continually climbing out of the angry ocean. And I saw that a few of those who were already safe on the platform were helping the poor creatures still in the angry waters to reach the place of safety ...

As I looked on, I saw that the occupants of that platform were quite a mixed company. ... But only a very few of them seemed to make it their business to get the people out of the sea. ... Though all had been rescued at one time or another from the ocean, nearly everyone seemed to have forgotten all about it. ... These people did not seem to have any care—that is, any agonizing care—about the poor perishing ones who were struggling and drowning before their eyes...."

William Booth, A Vision for the Lost

Application

1. Why should praying for others be the first step in sharing the life we have with Jesus with others?
2. What is the significance of praying for others by name?
3. Have you made it a regular practice of praying for others to know Jesus? If so, what has been the result? (Feel free to share seemingly small or large results; for instance, results don't have to just mean that someone's gotten baptized.)
4. Have you been the target of someone else's prayers?
5. How does the passage from Acts above illustrate the ways that prayer (and our response to insights we receive as we pray) can guide and lead us to knowing which people with whom to share Jesus?
6. As you read William Booth's Vision for the Lost above, what was your response? How can prayer move us from being those on the platform who've forgotten about those perishing to those who make it our "business to get the people out"?

This Week:

As Jay challenged, make a list of five people you know are far from Jesus and begin to pray for them. Invite others to pray for them with you. Pray for these people specifically and by name, asking God to engage them personally and that you would have favor with them to talk to them about Him.



Week 3: Becoming a Spiritual Detective (Listening)

Key Concept:

Learning to ask questions and listen well

Watch:

<https://vimeo.com/119089475>

Read:

1 Peter 3:15-16 – But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience....

Notes from Video:

- A. “My Father is always working” (John 5:17)
 - a. Jesus was effectively saying, “I’m partnering with how God is already moving.”
 - b. God is already pursuing, speaking to, drawing everybody whom you care about.

- B. Our job: to be Spiritual Detectives
 - a. Ask questions to understand people’s stories and see how God is already at work
 - b. Help others identify and pick out how God is moving in their lives
 - c. Don’t add dots, but help connect dots that are already there.

- C. Asking and Listening
 - a. Draws attention to how God is already at work within them
 - b. Helps them see who God really is and what He’s really like
 - i. Combats noise and distraction of condemnation, fear, shame, doubt, worry, etc.
 - c. Helps gives perspective by identifying the larger arc of their story and what is God up to in their lives.

Consider:

Paula came to faith in our church after years of atheism. The wounds from a father whose only attention came when he got her drunk and molested her as a teenager kept her alcohol dependent to numb the pain. She got sober through trusting a Higher Power who forgives, gives us second and third chance, and loves us enough to help us do what we can’t do ourselves as we surrender our will to doing his will only.

Paula joined my small group, and I had a chance to show her that the Higher Power she experienced healing her was the God Jesus revealed – there aren't other gods who do that! She came to faith and started following Christ.

Paula works doing developmental home therapy with kids. One of Paula's clients was a four-year-old named Luke, who had nearly died several times in the hospital due to complications at birth. He required ongoing therapy. Luke's mother, Shelly, had become friends with Paula over the year of therapy, and one day Shelly opened up to Paula about something troubling her.

"I'm concerned about Luke," Shelly began. "He's been having strange dreams or imaginative ideas, but I don't know where they could have come from."

"What kinds of strange dreams?" Paula asked.

"When I tuck him in for bed at night, he keeps telling me he wants to go and play in the fields with Jesus again. I asked him about it, and he insists that when he was in the hospital, Jesus came to get him and they would run and play in these beautiful meadows. As you know, his father's a doctor, and Andrew thinks it's a hallucination. I just can't figure out where he even heard about Jesus. We have never been to church, talked about Jesus, or let him watch anything on TV about Jesus. How did he come up with Jesus?"

Realizing that God might just be at work behind the scenes drawing this family to himself through the near-death experience of this child, Paula told Shelly what she had been learning about Jesus. God used that conversation to set Shelly and Andrew on a path of exploring faith. They started attending our church, and a year later, after learning about Jesus, they came to believe and follow him.

John Burke, *Unshockable Love*, pg. 217-218

Application:

1. Looking back over the past few weeks, we've been challenged and encouraged to begin sharing Jesus with others and to pray, by name, for our friends and loved ones who are far from Him. How has that gone for you? What have you experienced? What has been better than you anticipated? What has been worse?
2. We're now halfway through Multiply. Overall, how has this series impacted you? What questions do you have? What ideas or principles have confirmed things you already think and do? What ideas or practices are new and/or are challenging for you?
3. Do you have any experience with "classic" evangelism practices like handing out tracts or sharing your own story? How has that worked (or not worked)?
4. Respond to the principle illustrated in John 5:17 (that the Father is always at work and our job is to partner with Him). What sort of emotions or thoughts does that evoke for you?
5. How are asking and listening different than the "classic" methods? Do you think asking and listening are better or worse? Why/why not? What makes asking and listening hard in comparison to those classic methods? What makes it easier?
6. Asking and listening can be great tools to help others see the work of the Father in their lives. But, what is necessary in our own lives and relationships with Jesus *first* so that we can accurately identify His work in others?

7. As we know and experience the life that Jesus so freely gives us, how can we draw that out in others? As you think of specific people in your own life, what sorts of questions could you begin asking them?
8. Paula's story above is a great illustration of connecting dots that were already there. What are your thoughts about this story? Do you believe it can be that easy? Do you have any similar examples from your own life?

This Week:

Start to look at how God is already at work with those around you. Pray and ask God to show you what He's already doing in the people you've been praying for. As you have opportunity, begin to ask them questions that can help you identify what He's up to in their lives and point it out to them.

Here are the sorts of questions you could begin asking:

- What has been your spiritual story?
- What are you about? What's your life for?
- Where are you from? What is the family you grew up like? Do you have siblings? What was that like?
- What do you love about being married?
- What do you love about being a parent?
- What are your friendships like?
- What do you do?



Week 4: Developing Depth with Others

Key Concept:

Learning to move from surface conversations to depth

Watch:

<https://vimeo.com/119090475>

Read:

John 4:1-26 – Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?”⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

“Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”

Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

“I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

“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.”

The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

Notes from Video:

A. Depth is vital

- a. It’s where we feel moved, where we’ve shared something of our hearts, where we’ve been stirred emotionally.
- b. It’s where God is at work, where He’s moving, and where He’s speaking.
- c. If we want to engage people with the life we have with Jesus, we have to have ways to engage deeply.
- d. Jesus connected with people deeply in short amounts of time (John 3:1-21, John 4:1-26, John 5:1-15). He discussed core issues of the heart and life quickly because He knew how to engage from a place of depth.

B. Most of us aren’t trained how to engage deeply

- a. Hurts our marriages, friendships, parenting.
- b. Keeps us from knowing how to engage in conversations of faith with others (specifically those who are far from Jesus).

C. Layers of engagement

- a. Top:
 - i. Engagement is in relationship to the geography, physical space or experience we share with someone in the moment
- b. Second:
 - i. Connection moves us outside of the room/physical space to share components of our identity and learn a bit of theirs (occupation, family, marital status, etc.).
- c. Third (depth):
 - i. Understanding what makes people tick and starting to address the “why” questions of our lives (places of emotion, meaning, purpose, regrets, desires, etc.).
 - ii. Sharing our own lives and then asking questions.

D. The Third Layer

- a. We begin to understand how people are discovering meaning; eventually people begin to ask us questions.

- b. When we love Jesus, He's shaping who we are at the deep places of our life.
 - i. When we begin to love people, we share what we love with them.

E. The value of depth

- a. Most people are desperate to feel seen, known and cared for at a space of depth.
- b. When you share a deep space with someone, it's natural to share about Jesus.

Consider:

My tablemate had been a Muslim most of his life. He pointed out that being an African-American Muslim in a southern city, coupled with his current line of work, made for an often-uncomfortable existence.

"It hasn't been an easy go," he said. "As you might imagine, I've had a lot of struggles in social settings. And in my profession, we have a lot of cocktail parties and other evening events. The natural pattern for me is to show up fashionably late, graciously accept a drink and something to eat, and throw my efforts into trying to make some business connections. Inevitably, I wind up standing alone, stuck against a wall or isolated in a corner. As soon as I think I've lasted as long as social etiquette requires, I discretely plot my exit and then leave. It's just something I've learned to live with.

"One night, I was at this type of party. As usual, I noticed several small circles of people forming to chat about this or that. I wasn't included, but again, I've become accustomed to the scenario.

"At one point, I saw a man on the other side of the room engrossed in discussion with a few people of his own kind, if you will. Suddenly he looked away from that particular group and noticed me standing along by the far wall. This is exactly how it happened, Bill. He extricated himself from his conversational clique, walked clear across the room, stuck out his hand to me, and introduced himself.

"You now, it was so easy and so natural," the Muslim man continued. "In the moments that followed, we talked about our mutual profession, about our families and business and sports. Eventually our conversation found its way to issues of faith. I took a risk in telling him that I was a Muslim – I was a little hesitant about how he'd respond. He told me he was a Christ-follower but that, truth be told, he knew almost nothing about Islam. You can imagine my surprise when he asked if I would do him the *courtesy* of explaining the basics of Islam over a cup of coffee sometime. Can you believe that? He said he was a curious type and genuinely wanted to understand my faith system and why I'd devoted my life to it.

"The next time we met, whatever doubts I had about him truly wanting to hear my beliefs were quickly dispelled. He *really* sought to understand my life and faith. We began meeting almost weekly, and each time I sat across from him, I was stunned by what an engaged and compassionate listener he was.

"One week, I even took the opportunity to ask him about his beliefs. It'd been a Christian as a kid but had left God, left the faith, left it all because the church my family attended was so racially prejudiced. I wanted no part of *that* Christianity. When the tables turned and I was on the receiving end of *his* faith story, he patiently described why he'd given his whole life to this person named Jesus Christ. I couldn't believe how easily the conversations evolved – and how respectfully and sensitively he conveyed his love of God. Despite our deep-seated religious differences, we were becoming fast friends.

"It went on this way for some time as we'd meet to hash through nuances of our faith experiences. Sometimes he would ask for a couple of days to find answers to my questions; other times, he knew exactly where I was struggling and seemed to have the perfect words to untangle my confusion. There finally came a day – I remember being home alone when this happened – that I felt totally compelled to

pray to God. I kneeled beside my bed, told God everything I was feeling, and in the end gave my life to Jesus Christ. And in the space of about a week, that single decision changed *everything* in my world. Every single thing.”

Bill Hybels, *Just Walk Across the Room*, pg. 20-22

Application:

1. This past week, were you able to observe and/or ask how God was at work in someone else’s life? Why or why not? How did it go? What obstacles (internal or external), if any, got in your way? What surprised you about this exercise?
2. Read the passage from John 4 above. What do you notice about *how* Jesus engaged with the woman at the well? How did Jesus quickly move through the three “layers” of engagement Jay mentioned in the video?
3. When is the last time you engaged in a conversation of depth with anyone (spouse, family member, friend, co-worker)?
4. How do you feel about trying to engage deeply with someone who doesn’t know Jesus?
5. What keeps you from asking questions of depth to someone?
6. What does the passage from *Just Walk Across the Room* (above) illustrate about people’s desire to be known and connect with others? How did the Muslim man react at first to the idea that someone actually wanted to engage with him? How does this passage illustrate how powerful valuing someone else is? How can we learn from this example?

This Week:

While similar to what we talked about last week (asking questions as a spiritual detective to determine what God’s up to in their lives), we’re now taking this idea a step further. We’re going deeper into relationships with others by sharing deeper things about ourselves and asking questions accordingly.

This week, live a little more deeply with some of the people who surround you. Take some time to try to understand and listen to others, to share deeply, and to learn the art of asking great questions and living with depth. A few examples would be:

- I remember my first year of marriage. _____ happened and/or was really a struggle for me. But, _____ was great. How’s it been for you?
- What do you do for a living? Why did you choose that profession? What do you hope to do with that? What are your dreams for it?
- How many children do you have? I have _____. How has parenting been for you? I feel like I’ve experienced/learned _____. What has it been like for you?



Week 5: Telling Your Story

Key Concept:

Thinking through and communicating your story in Jesus

Watch:

<https://vimeo.com/119090477>

Read:

Acts 22:1-22 – “Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense.” When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet.

Then Paul said: “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as the high priest and all the Council can themselves testify. I even obtained letters from them to their associates in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished. About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, ‘Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?’

“Who are you, Lord?’ I asked.

‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,’ he replied. My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

“What shall I do, Lord?’ I asked.

“Get up,’ the Lord said, ‘and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.’ My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.

“A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. He stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him.

“Then he said: ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’

“When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance and saw the Lord speaking to me. ‘Quick!’ he said. ‘Leave Jerusalem immediately, because the people here will not accept your testimony about me.’

“‘Lord,’ I replied, ‘these people know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’

“Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’ ”

The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, “Rid the earth of him! He’s not fit to live!”

Acts 26:1-22 – Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.”

So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: “King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

“The Jewish people all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that I conformed to the strictest sect of our religion, living as a Pharisee. And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our ancestors that I am on trial today. This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. King Agrippa, it is because of this hope that these Jews are accusing me. Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

“I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the Lord’s people in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities.

“On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’

“Then I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’

“‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied. ‘Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

“So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds. That is why some Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. But God has helped me to this very day; so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen— “

Notes from Video:

- A. Testimony is
 - a. Powerful
 - b. An account of an experience that can influence the lives of others and the decisions they make.

- B. You have a story to tell about how God has engaged you. The story *you* have in Jesus:
 - a. Is more powerful than you realize.
 - b. Is unique and precious.
 - c. Can give others an example of how they might encounter God.

- C. Paul's example
 - a. He shared who he was before he knew God, his encounter with Jesus Christ, and how it affected everything about who he was and was about.
 - b. The way he tells his story
 - i. Before his encounter with Jesus: fast synopsis of who he had been
 - ii. His actual encounter with Jesus: painstakingly detailed account of what happened
 - iii. After his encounter with Jesus: fast synopsis of what he had done since and who he had become

- D. What Paul's example means for us
 - a. When telling our stories, we need to slow down to give detail about how we encountered God so others have an example of how they might experience Him.
 - b. Everyone has a story.
 - i. You've encountered God in a specific and unique to you way that mirrors what others have experienced and need to hear.
 - ii. The more dramatic story doesn't necessarily bring people to Jesus
 - iii. We need "normal" stories that show how normal people in the midst of their normal lives encounter the living God in way that changes them forever.
 - c. We need to learn (and practice) how to tell our stories so that others may encounter Jesus the ways we have.

Consider:

"You may not know *how* to share, but it's very easy. It starts with your own story." I gave everyone [a] piece of paper, and I gave them my example. I said, "Your story is very easy. There are only three parts. The first is what your life was like before Christ. Before you were a Christian, what was your life like? Were you very troubled or angry? You can write down what your life was like before Christ. The second part is how you became a Christian. The third part is what has happened in your life since you became a Christian. Do you have a joyful life or peaceful life? Write only one page; don't make it too long. If it's too long, people won't have the patience to listen. And be sure to tell your story in an interesting manner."

I gave them 15 minutes to write it down. After they were finished, I said, "Everybody stand up and look at your testimony. Don't listen to other people. Read it out loud five times." Everybody can write, but not

everybody can talk smoothly when they are talking to other people. So I told them, “Speak loud; it is very important. If you say your story out loud five times you’ll have it memorized, so that you don’t have to take your paper with you. You want to have it memorized, not just written down. If you just read it, it cannot move people’s hearts.”

Then the 30 people stood and read their testimonies out loud five times. After this, I said, “Now, split up into groups of two, and tell it to each other. When you listen, you have a responsibility to tell your partner which parts you don’t understand. If there is a part that he can make more interesting, help him revise it. Talk to each other.”

When we finished it, they were very excited. By that time it was already 10 p.m. I told them, “Your testimony can move people’s hearts. When people hear your testimony, some will say, ‘Oh, that’s good. I want what you have.’”

Steve Smith with Ying Kai, *T4T: A Discipleship Re-revolution* pg. 52-53

Application:

1. This past week, were you able to begin to engage more deeply with others? What was your experience? How did others respond? Having your attention focused on doing so this week, did your relationships seem any different than they have been in the past?
2. Above are two different accounts the Apostle Paul gave of his testimony. Compare and contrast them. Where and how are they similar? Where and how are they different?
3. What sort of power does “story” or “testimony” have in your life? When someone shares a story about an experience they have had (whether about their faith or something else), how does it affect you? Are you inclined to consider thinking differently about a topic after hearing about someone’s experience?
4. Can you identify a significant moment when God grabbed a hold of your life? What are two or three moments you can recall where God intervened and shaped the whole way you see Him and how you live?
5. How could you shape those moments into a story that allows others the opportunity to experience Jesus as you have? What details should you include?
6. Have you ever struggled with believing that you don’t have a significant or meaningful story? How has this week’s video and taking the time to work through questions 4 and 5 affected that belief?

This Week:

Tell your story. Practice telling it in three-five minutes in a similar format as Paul did (brief “before” and “after” with the main focus being a very detailed account of exactly how God encountered you). Then, share it with someone you know or feel comfortable with. Allow them to provide feedback on what wasn’t clear, what parts to focus on, what to make more interesting, and what to revise, if necessary.

Finally, share your story with someone who doesn’t know Jesus. Watch to see how God uses your story to help them experience what it might be like to have a life with Jesus.



Week 6: Make Them Say No

Key Concept:

Ask people to give their lives to Jesus; find out what is really keeping them from Him

Watch:

<https://vimeo.com/119090474>

Read:

Romans 10:9-13 – If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.” For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Notes from Video:

A. Decisions

- a. The most spiritual thing you’re going to do this week is make decisions
- b. Not all decisions are equal in weight.
 - i. Some change everything about who you become, the life you’re going to live, the future and the hope that you have.
 - ii. There are some decisions you don’t want to make so you delay or stall.

B. Helping others decide.

- a. At some point, each of us needs someone to help us to make the decision before us.
- b. As people who love and follow Jesus and share our lives with others, we can help others make the decision to follow Jesus. We need to ask them to choose Jesus.
 - i. Baptism – a big, public decision with powerful symbolism:
 1. Going under water (dying with Christ); coming out of the water (living a new life in Jesus)

C. Making people decide

- a. Forces them to deal with the real objections of their heart.
- b. Allows you to find out what’s really going on, why people are really hesitating.
 - i. You learn what’s real when you make people say “no”
 - ii. Leads to new moments, questions and conversations of real depth

- D. Having courage to ask
 - a. It's okay if they say no; God's not offended.
 - b. You can get to the core of who they are and the core questions they're asking.
 - c. Others were courageous for you.

- E. Sometimes others simply don't know they need to make a decision to say yes to Jesus.
 - a. You'd be surprised at how many people are just waiting for you to ask.
 - b. They are hoping someone can show them how to make the decision to follow Jesus.
 - c. They are dying for someone to help them move them out of their hesitancy so they can really start living.

Consider:

Whatever gospel presentation you use...you **must include a call to commitment**.

John the Baptist, Jesus, the apostles and other evangelists in Acts repeatedly called people to make a commitment after sharing the good news. **You don't know if someone is ready to receive the gospel until you ask him or call him to respond.**

I often hear people say that we should just wait until the listener, in great conviction, calls out to us: "What must I do to be saved?" That situation is very rare, even in Scripture. Even in the instance quoted in Acts 2:37, Peter and the apostles continued to plead with the people, exhorting them to repent (Acts 2:40)!

Effective evangelism involves effective leadership – to bring people into the kingdom. God convicts, but we must persuade. **Biblical persuasion is calling people to respond to God's conviction.** It is not manipulation, but leading people to respond to what God is saying.

People generally will not say "yes" until you call them to respond.

The most effective evangelists ask people to follow Jesus. Remember, 100% of those you don't share the gospel with and call to commitment will not respond.

Steve Smith with Ying Kai, *T4T: A Discipleship Re-revolution* pg. 219-221

Application:

1. How did last week go? Did you practice your story and share it with others? What was the result? What did you discover about yourself, about your relationship with Jesus, and about others?
2. Have you ever been the recipient of someone else's forcing you to make a decision? What happened? How did you respond?
3. Have you ever asked someone to make the decision to follow Jesus? If so, what was the result? If not, why not? What holds you back from asking others to follow Jesus?
4. Do you have someone in your life right now whom you could ask about following Jesus? Who needs you to force them to make a decision?
5. Now that Multiply has come to an end, do you think differently about what it means to share your faith with others? Is it easier or harder than what you thought? Scarier or more empowering? How will you live and think differently as a result of this series?

This Week:

As you've gone through this Multiply series, we've laid out a process for how you can help others find the life that Jesus freely offers. Hopefully you've been engaging with the material and trying out the challenges we've presented each week. So, now this week, is there someone you can help make the decision to choose Jesus? Whom can you ask, "Have you made a decision to follow Jesus? If not, why not? And why not right now?" Pray that God meets you and them – that everything changes from that moment forward.