

LEARNING TO LOVEWELL

Crosswalk Daily Study

INTRODUCTION

At Crosswalk, we talk often about our End Statements, five descriptions of the kind of people we are becoming together. They remind us that we are growing into a community where everyone belongs, where people learn to walk with God in honest and authentic ways, where the ways of Jesus matter in our everyday world, where we live beyond ourselves by caring for the vulnerable, and where leadership always looks like service. These statements aren't rules or requirements; they're the heartbeat of our community, shaping everything from our teaching to the way we treat one another.

That's why we're beginning this journey in Genesis. The word itself means beginning, and Genesis invites us into the first movements of God's love, how humanity was created with intention, with dignity, with purpose, and with relationship at the center. These early stories show us who God is, who we are, and what it means to be human in God's world. They also show the first cracks of fear, shame, and hiding, experiences we all know too well. And yet, from the very beginning, God's response to human failure is movement toward relationship, not away from it.

This is the heart of Lovewell. It isn't a slogan to print on mugs or a hashtag to stick on a post. It's a way of living that takes its cues from the God who blesses before we perform, who seeks us out when we hide, who covers our shame, and who continues to call us into partnership and purpose.

This guide is designed to help you slow down and enter these stories with openness. Each day gives you space to read, reflect, and consider how God might be inviting you to love well in your relationships, your home, your work, and your community.

Throughout the series, you'll hear different voices from our teaching team, Pastor Andreas Beccai for the first two weeks, Pastor David Ferguson for the next two, and Pastor Paddy McCoy for the final two. Each voice brings a unique perspective, but all share the same desire: that together we would become a community shaped by grace, honesty, compassion, creativity, and the relentless love of Jesus.

As we walk through Genesis we're learning that the God who spoke worlds into existence still speaks love into our chaos, order into our confusion, and hope into our despair.

Get ready for a journey that starts at the very beginning and leads us to love more fully than we ever thought possible.

Pastor Andreas Beccai and Paddy McCoy

LEARNING TO LOVEWELL - WEEK 1

By Andreas Beccai

WEEK 1 - MONDAY

Created for Love Genesis 1:26-31 (NLT) *"Then God said, 'Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.' So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Then God blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.' Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day."*

"Let us make human beings in our image." These might be the most important words ever spoken about identity. Not "Let us make servants" or "Let us make subjects" but "Let us make image-bearers." People who will reflect who we are.

Notice the deliberate language here. After creating everything else with "Let there be," God shifts to "Let us make." This is personal. This is the Trinity in consultation, creating something that will bear their likeness in the world.

But what does it mean to bear God's image? It means we're created with the capacity for relationship, creativity, love, justice, and beauty, all the things that define God's character. We're not accidents or afterthoughts. We're the intentional result of a God who chose to share His nature with us.

Learning to Lovewell means: every person you encounter today carries this image. That difficult coworker, that frustrating family member, that stranger who cut you off in traffic, they all bear the image of the God who is love.

This isn't something they earned or something that can be lost based on behavior. It's stamped into their very being. When we truly grasp this, it transforms how we see people. We stop seeing them as problems to solve or competition to beat, and we start seeing them as image-bearers to honor.

The foundation of loving well isn't finding people who deserve our love—it's recognizing that everyone already carries the image of the One who is love itself.

- 1. How does knowing every person bears God's image change how you approach difficult relationships?**
 - 2. What would your day look like if you truly saw everyone as an image-bearer?**
 - 3. Where do you need to remember your own identity as God's image-bearer today?**
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WEEK 1 - TUESDAY

Blessed Before Performing Genesis 1:26-31 (NLT) *"Then God blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.' Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!"*

"Then God blessed them." This happens before Adam and Eve do anything. Before they accomplish anything. Before they prove themselves worthy. God blesses them simply because they exist, because they bear His image.

This is revolutionary. Most of us have been conditioned to believe that blessing comes after performance. Work hard, then get rewarded. Prove yourself, then receive love. Earn your place, then find acceptance.

But Genesis 1 flips this script entirely. God's blessing comes first. God's love comes first. God's acceptance comes first. Everything else flows from this foundational truth.

The blessing isn't just nice words, it's empowerment. "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it." God doesn't just love them; God entrusts them with meaningful work. God gives them authority, purpose, and partnership in caring for creation.

This is what love does: it blesses first and empowers for purpose. It doesn't wait for people to earn their way into significance. It sees potential and calls it forth. It gives responsibility as an expression of trust, not as a test to pass.

Think about the people in your life who need to know they're blessed before they perform. Maybe it's a child who's struggling in school. Maybe it's a spouse who's going through a difficult season. Maybe it's a friend who's made some poor choices recently.

Learning to Lovewell means learning to bless people into their potential rather than withholding love until they reach it. It means seeing what God sees in them, His image, and calling that forth through our words and actions.

Jesus embodied this perfectly. He called fishermen to be disciples before they had theological degrees. He called Matthew to follow Him before Matthew quit his corrupt job. He saw potential and blessed it into reality.

- 1. Who in your life needs to receive blessing before they perform?**
 - 2. How might your relationships change if you led with blessing rather than waiting for achievement?**
 - 3. What area of your own life do you need to remember is already blessed by God?**
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WEEK 1 - WEDNESDAY

Made for Dominion – Together Genesis 1:26-28 (NLT) *"They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground... Then God blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it.'"*

God doesn't just create humans and leave them to figure out their purpose. God immediately gives them meaningful work: dominion over creation. But this isn't domination, it's stewardship. It's caring leadership modeled after God's own character.

The Hebrew word for "reign" here is the same word used for a shepherd caring for sheep or a king caring for his people. It's leadership that serves, protects, and nurtures. It's authority exercised for the benefit of those under your care.

And notice this: God gives this command to them, plural. Not to Adam alone, not to Eve alone, but to both together. The work of stewarding creation, of being fruitful and multiplying, of filling the earth, this is partnership work.

This reveals something essential about God's design for love: we're meant to work together. Not in competition with each other, not with one dominating the other, but in true partnership where each person's gifts contribute to the shared mission.

The Hebrew word for "help" used later to describe Eve doesn't suggest inferiority; it's the same word used to describe God as our helper. It means someone who comes alongside to provide what's needed to accomplish the mission. It's about complementary partnership, not hierarchical dominance.

Learning to Lovewell means learning to see relationships as partnerships in purpose, not power struggles. It means asking, "How can we accomplish together what neither of us could accomplish alone?" instead of "How can I get my way?"

This transforms marriage from a competition into a collaboration. It transforms parenting from control to coaching. It transforms friendship from what I can get to what we can give. It transforms work teams from individual achievement to collective success.

Jesus modeled this perfectly. He didn't try to do ministry alone. He called disciples, trained them, and sent them out in pairs. He understood that the work of the kingdom is partnership work.

- 1. How can you empower someone in your life for their God-given purpose rather than trying to control them?**
 - 2. In what relationship do you need to shift from competition to partnership?**
 - 3. What unique contribution are you bringing to the partnerships God has placed you in?**
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WEEK 1 - THURSDAY

Very Good Genesis 1:31 (NLT) *"Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!"*

After creating humans, God doesn't just say it's "good" like He did with everything else. He says it's "very good." The Hebrew here suggests something that is exceedingly, abundantly, supremely good. Humanity is the crescendo of creation.

This isn't about human superiority, it's about human significance. Among all of creation, humans alone bear God's image. Among all of creation, humans alone receive both blessing and responsibility. Among all of creation, humans alone are called into conscious partnership with their Creator.

But here's what we often miss: God says this about humanity before the fall. Before sin. Before failure and disappointment and all the messiness that would follow. God looks at humans in their original design and declares them "very good."

This original declaration still echoes over every person you meet. Yes, sin has marred the image. Yes, people make terrible choices and hurt each other and fall far short of what they were created to be. But underneath all of that, the original "very good" still resonates.

Learning to Lovewell means learning to see past the brokenness to the original design. It means looking at people not just as they are, but as they were created to be. It means seeing the "very good" that God still sees, even when it's buried under layers of hurt, sin, and dysfunction.

This doesn't mean we ignore reality or make excuses for destructive behavior. It means we approach people with hope rather than cynicism. It means we believe in redemption rather than writing people off. It means we see potential where others see problems.

Jesus was masterful at this. When He looked at Peter, He didn't just see an impulsive fisherman who would deny Him three times. He saw the rock upon which the church would be built. When He looked at the woman at the well, He didn't just see her checkered past. He saw an evangelist who would reach her entire town.

- 1. Who in your life do you need to see through God's "very good" lens rather than focusing on their current struggles?**
 - 2. How might believing in someone's original design change how you interact with them?**
 - 3. Where do you need to remember that God still sees you as "very good" despite your failures?**
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WEEK 1 - FRIDAY

Male and Female Genesis 1:27 (NLT) *"So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."*

The image of God is so rich, so multifaceted, that it takes both male and female to fully reflect it. This isn't about one being superior to the other, it's about both being necessary to display the fullness of God's character.

Think about this: God could have created just one gender. But instead, God chose to reflect His image through the beautiful diversity of male and female, each bringing unique aspects of God's nature into the world.

This tells us something profound about love: love celebrates difference rather than demanding sameness. Love sees diversity as strength, not as a problem to solve. Love recognizes that we need each other's unique perspectives to see God more clearly.

This principle extends far beyond gender. In every relationship, marriage, friendship, church, workplace, we encounter people who are different from us. Different personalities, different backgrounds, different ways of thinking and processing life. Learning to Lovewell means seeing these differences as gifts rather than threats.

Too often, we try to love people by making them more like us. We want them to think like we think, value what we value, approach life the way we approach life. But Genesis 1 suggests that God delights in diversity. The image of God is big enough to be reflected in countless different ways.

Jesus surrounded Himself with an incredibly diverse group of disciples. Impulsive Peter and thoughtful John. Tax collector Matthew and zealot Simon. They were all different, and their differences made them stronger as a group, not weaker.

When we learn to love people in their uniqueness rather than trying to change them into our image, we discover things about God we never would have seen otherwise. We need their perspective. We need their gifts. We need their unique way of reflecting God's character.

- 1. How can you celebrate someone's differences rather than trying to change them to be more like you?**
 - 2. What unique aspect of God's image do you see reflected in the people closest to you?**
 - 3. How might your community or family be stronger because of its diversity rather than despite it?**
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LEARNING TO LOVEWELL - WEEK 2

By Andreas Beccai

As you enter Week 2, remember Crosswalk's End Statements: we're becoming people of belonging, becoming, generosity, restoration, and presence. This week especially invites us into restoration and presence, learning how God meets us when shame enters the story and how we can Lovewell in the middle of failure, fear, and hiding.

WEEK 2 - MONDAY

When Shame Enters Genesis 3:8-10 (NLT) *"When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the Lord God among the trees. Then the Lord God called to the man, 'Where are you?' He replied, 'I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.'"*

Everything has changed. The "very good" of chapter 1 has been shattered. Adam and Eve have disobeyed God, and now shame has entered the human story for the first time. They're hiding from the One who created them, blessed them, and walked with them in a perfect relationship.

Brené Brown puts it this way: "Shame loves secrecy. The most dangerous thing to do after a shaming experience is hide or bury our story. When we bury our story, the shame metastasizes." (*Daring Greatly*). Notice what shame does: it makes us hide. It makes us afraid of the very love we desperately need. It convinces us that if people really knew us, our thoughts, our failures, our struggles, they would reject us. So we hide behind masks, behind performance, behind carefully crafted images of who we think we should be. But here's what breaks my heart about this story: God comes walking in the garden at the usual time. The Hebrew suggests this was God's regular practice, walking with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day. Even after everything has gone wrong, God shows up.

This is our first picture of love after failure, and it sets the pattern for everything that follows. When we're hiding in shame, when we've broken trust, when we've messed up beyond measure, God doesn't stay away. God doesn't wait for us to get our act together. God comes looking.

"Where are you?" This isn't God being confused about Adam's location. This is God's heart breaking over the distance that shame has created. It's God saying, "What happened to us? Where did our relationship go? I'm still here. I'm still walking in the garden. Why are you hiding from Me?"

This is what love does when people are hiding: it pursues. Not with condemnation, but with concern. Not with punishment, but with the persistent question, "Where are you?" Because love knows that shame thrives in darkness and isolation, and healing happens in the light of relationship.

1. Where in your life are you hiding from God or others because of shame?

2. **Who in your life might be hiding right now and needs to hear "Where are you?" from a place of love?**
 3. **How can you create environments where people feel safe to come out of hiding?**
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WEEK 2 - TUESDAY

The Fear that Shame Creates Genesis 3:8-10 (NLT) *"I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."*

"I was afraid." These might be the saddest words in the Bible. Adam, who was created for fearless intimacy with God, is now afraid of the One who loves him most. Shame has twisted his perception so completely that love feels like a threat.

This is what shame does to relationships: it makes love feel dangerous. It convinces us that if people get too close, they'll discover who we really are and reject us. So, we push away the very people we need most. We sabotage relationships before they can hurt us. We choose loneliness over the risk of rejection.

Adam says he's afraid because he's naked. But nakedness was never the problem before. Genesis 2:25 tells us that Adam and Eve were "both naked, but they felt no shame." The nakedness isn't new, the shame is new. And shame makes vulnerability feel terrifying.

Here's the cruel irony: the very thing that shame tells us to avoid, being known, is the only thing that can heal shame. As Tim Keller once wrote: "To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God." (*The Meaning of Marriage*).

This is why learning to Lovewell requires courage. It means being willing to know people in their brokenness and love them anyway. It means creating space for people to be honest about their struggles without fear of judgment. It means responding to confession with compassion, not condemnation.

Jesus understood this perfectly. When the woman caught in adultery was brought to Him, everyone else wanted to stone her. But Jesus created space for her to be seen, known, and loved anyway. "Neither do I condemn you," He said. "Go and sin no more." Love first, then transformation.

The people in your life who are most difficult, most defensive, most prone to pushing others away, they're usually the ones carrying the most shame. They're not just being difficult; they're protecting themselves the only way they know how.

1. **How has shame made you afraid of the very love you need most?**
2. **What would it look like to create safer spaces for people to be vulnerable without fear?**
3. **Who in your life might be pushing you away because they're afraid of being truly known?**

WEEK 2 - WEDNESDAY

Love that Seeks (And the Sound of Love) Genesis 3:8-9 (NLT) *"When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the Lord God among the trees. Then the Lord God called to the man, 'Where are you?'"*

They heard God walking. This suggests that God's footsteps in the garden were a familiar sound. A sound they associated with joy, with fellowship, with the best part of their day. God wasn't just a distant creator, God was a regular companion who showed up consistently. But now, the same sound that once brought them running toward God sends them running away from God. The footsteps haven't changed. God hasn't changed. But their perception of God has been completely altered by shame and fear. Yet God keeps walking.

God doesn't wait for Adam to work up the courage to come out of hiding. God doesn't stand at a distance hoping Adam will eventually return. God actively seeks. God calls out. God takes the initiative to bridge the gap that sin and shame have created. "Where are you?" isn't about location, it's about relationships. It's God saying, "I know where you are physically. What I want to know is: where are we? What's happened to our connection? Why are you hiding from me?" This is the first picture we have of seeking love, and it becomes the pattern for every story of redemption that follows. The God who could have written humanity off after their first major failure instead becomes the God who seeks. The God who pursues. The God who won't let shame have the last word.

Think about the people in your life who are hiding right now. Maybe they're hiding behind busyness, behind anger, behind addictions, behind perfectionism. Maybe they've made choices that hurt you, and now they're too ashamed to face you. The natural human response is to wait for them to come back and apologize.

But God models a different way. God models love that seeks. Love that asks, "Where are you?" not as an accusation but as an invitation. Love that refuses to let shame create permanent distance. Love that takes the first step toward reconciliation. This doesn't mean we condone or enable destructive behavior or ignore the need for accountability. It means we lead with love rather than leading with judgment. It means we're more concerned with restoration than with being right.

1. **Who in your life is hiding and needs to hear "Where are you?" from a place of love rather than judgment?**
 2. **How can you take the initiative to seek restoration rather than waiting for others to make the first move?**
 3. **What would change if you approached broken relationships with curiosity ("Where are you?") rather than accusations.**
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WEEK 2 - THURSDAY

Love that Covers Genesis 3:21 (NLT) *"And the Lord God made clothing from animal skins to clothe them."*

This might be the most tender verse in all of Genesis. Adam and Eve have just brought sin and death into God's perfect world. They've broken trust, shifted blame, and damaged their relationship with God and each other. And God's response? God makes them clothes.

Think about this. The Creator of the universe, who has every right to be angry, disappointed, and hurt, responds to their shame and vulnerability with practical love. God doesn't lecture them about consequences. God doesn't withhold care until they learn their lesson. God sees their need and meets it with compassion.

This is what loving well looks like when people mess up: we meet their immediate needs with practical compassion. We don't use their failures as opportunities to prove our point or teach them a lesson. We see their shame, their vulnerability, their need, and we cover it with love.

Notice that making these clothes required sacrifice. Something had to die to cover their shame. This is the first picture of substitutionary love in the Bible, innocent life given to cover guilt. It's a preview of the cross, but it's also a present example of how love works: sometimes loving well costs us something.

The Hebrew word for "clothe" here is the same word used later in the Bible for being clothed with righteousness, with salvation, with honor. God isn't just covering their physical nakedness, God is covering their shame. God is restoring their dignity. God is making them presentable again.

This is what we're called to do for people who are living in shame. We don't just ignore their struggles or pretend everything is fine. We practically, tangibly cover their shame with love. We help restore their dignity. We make them feel human again.

Jesus did this constantly. He covered the woman caught in adultery with protection and grace. He covered the disciples' failures with patience and restoration. He covered our sin with His own life. This is love that doesn't just feel sorry for people, it does something about their condition.

- 1. Who in your life is living in shame and needs you to cover them with practical love?**
 - 2. What would it look like to meet someone's immediate needs without making them feel worse about their situation?**
 - 3. How can you help restore dignity to someone who has lost it through failure or difficult circumstance**
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WEEK 2 - FRIDAY

A God to Befriend Genesis 3:8-21 (NLT) *Looking at the whole story: From hiding in fear to being covered in love.*

When we read Genesis 3 as one complete story, we see the most beautiful picture of God's heart toward humanity. This isn't a story about an angry God looking to punish. This is a story about a heartbroken God looking to restore.

Adam and Eve expect judgment, they're hiding in terror, waiting for the hammer to fall. But instead of condemnation, they receive conversation. Instead of punishment, they receive pursuit. Instead of abandonment, they receive covering. This is a God who can be befriended, not feared.

Yes, there are consequences to their choices. Sin always has consequences. But the consequences come wrapped in love, cushioned by care, and accompanied by hope. Even the curse contains hints of redemption. Even in discipline, God is working toward restoration.

This sets the tone for every interaction between God and humanity that follows. This is the God who calls Abraham to be His friend. This is the God who wrestles with Jacob and gives him a new name. This is the God who walks with Enoch and converses with Moses face to face. And ultimately, this is the God who becomes flesh in Jesus Christ and says, "I no longer call you servants, but friends."

The God we meet in Genesis 3 is the same God who seeks us out, covers our shame, and invites us into relationships despite our failures.

Learning to Lovewell means becoming this kind of person for others. Not the person everyone has to fear disappointing, but the person everyone knows they can turn to when they've messed up. Not the person who holds grudges, but the person who holds hope. Not the person who says "I told you so," but the person who says "How can I help?"

When people think about coming to you with their failures, their struggles, their shame, do they see someone who will judge them, or someone who will cover them? Do they see someone to fear, or someone to befriend?

1. **How can you become a "safe person" for others when they're struggling with failure or shame?**
 2. **What would change in your relationships if people saw you as someone who covers rather than exposes their weaknesses?**
 3. **How does knowing that God pursues you in your failures change how you pursue others in theirs.**
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LEARNING TO LOVEWELL - WEEK 3

By Andreas Beccai

A community where people learn and grow in an authentic relationship with God.

WEEK 3 - MONDAY

The Friendship God Wants John 15:15 (NLT) "I no longer call you slaves, who don't understand what their master is doing. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me."

Jesus doesn't want servants. He doesn't want religious robots going through the motions. He doesn't want people who show up out of fear or obligation. He wants friends. Actual friends. This might be the most revolutionary statement in all of Scripture. The God of the universe, the Creator of galaxies and atoms, the One who holds all power and authority, looks at flawed, broken, inconsistent people and says, "I want friendship with you."

Many of us grew up with a different message. Maybe you learned that a relationship with God was work, something you had to maintain through perfect behavior and constant effort. Maybe it felt like being related to a demanding relative, someone you had to please but could never quite satisfy. Someone always watching. Always evaluating. Always just a bit disappointed. Maybe the message was: do enough, pray enough, be enough, and maybe—*maybe*—God will accept you.

But Jesus torches this entire script. He's not standing at a distance with a checklist of requirements. He's inviting you into the kind of relationship where secrets are shared, where hearts are known, where love flows freely. "I have told you everything," He says. Friends don't hide from each other. Friends trust each other with what matters most.

Think about your closest friendships. They're not built on performance. You don't earn your way into your best friend's heart every single day. You're loved because you're you, not because of what you produce or achieve. That's the kind of relationship God offers.

And here's the thing: your friends know you. They've seen you at your worst, tired, cranky, selfish, petty. They've heard your worst opinions, witnessed your worst moments, seen behind whatever mask you wear for the rest of the world. And they still choose you. They still want you around. They still pick up the phone when you call.

That's what Jesus is offering. Not a sterile, distant, transactional arrangement where you perform and God tolerates you. But genuine friendship. The kind where you're known, really known, and wanted anyway.

Jesus chose this word carefully: *friends*. Not subjects who bow from a distance. Not employees who clock in and out. Not students who are always being graded. Friends who belong, who are welcomed, who are wanted just as they are. Friends who get to show up messy and uncertain and still-figuring-it-out. Friends who don't have to pretend.

1. What messages did you receive growing up about what God wants from you?
 2. How would your spiritual life change if you truly believed God wants friendship with you?
 3. What would it look like to approach God today as a friend rather than as someone you have to impress?
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WEEK 3 - TUESDAY

Connected to the Source John 15:4-5 (NLT) “Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”

Jesus uses the image of a vine and branches to describe what relationship with Him looks like. And what's striking about this metaphor is how effortless it makes fruitfulness sound. The branch doesn't strain and struggle to produce grapes. It just stays connected to the vine, and fruit happens naturally.

This is the opposite of how many of us have been taught to approach God. We've been told that spiritual growth is about trying harder, doing more, being better. We've turned relationship into a performance review where we're constantly falling short.

But Jesus says the secret isn't effort, it's connection. Stay attached. Remain. Abide. Let the life of God flow through you like sap through a branch, and watch what grows.

When you're truly connected to God, you're connected to the source of everything good. You're connected to love itself (1 John 4:16). You're connected to acceptance that doesn't waver. You're connected to forgiveness that doesn't run out. You're connected to joy, peace, patience, kindness, all the fruit that makes life actually worth living (Galatians 5:22-23).

Here's what's beautiful about this: God isn't asking you to generate these qualities on your own. God is inviting you to receive them, to stay close and to let His life become your life.

Think about what happens when a branch gets cut off from the vine. It doesn't just stop producing fruit, it starts dying. It wither and loses its vitality. That's what happens to us when we try to live disconnected from God. We might look okay on the outside for a while, but internally we're drying up, losing the life we were created for.

But when we stay connected, everything changes. We find ourselves becoming the kind of people we've always wanted to be, not through white-knuckle effort but through organic transformation. Love flows more naturally. Patience comes more easily. Joy bubbles up even in difficult circumstances.

1. Where have you been trying to produce spiritual fruit through effort rather than connection?
2. What does “remaining in Jesus” look like practically in your daily life?

3. How might your spiritual life feel different if it was about staying close rather than trying harder?

WEEK 3 - WEDNESDAY

The Door is Open Revelation 3:20 (NLT) “Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.”

Here’s one of the most tender images in all of Scripture: God standing at the door, knocking. Not breaking it down. Not demanding entry. Not threatening consequences if you don’t answer quickly enough. Just knocking. Waiting. Inviting.

This is who God is. The One who makes the first move. The One who initiates. The One who seeks relationship before we even think to seek Him.

Maybe you’ve been waiting for the courage to approach God. Maybe you’ve been thinking, “I’ll reach out to Him when I get my life together. When I stop struggling with this sin. When I’m finally good enough to deserve His attention.” But Jesus is already at the door. Already knocking. Already inviting you in, mess and all.

Notice what He promises: “We will share a meal together as friends.” In Jesus’ culture, sharing a meal was the ultimate sign of friendship and intimacy. You didn’t eat with enemies or strangers. You ate with people you trusted, people you enjoyed, people you wanted to know deeply.

God doesn’t want to inspect you from a distance. God doesn’t want to give you a list of improvements and send you away to work on them alone. God wants to pull up a chair, pour you a drink, and share life with you. God wants conversation and laughter and the comfortable silence that happens between friends who truly know each other.

But here’s the beautiful and sometimes difficult truth: God won’t force His way in. The door only opens from the inside. Not because God is playing games or testing you, but because real friendship requires choice. God wants you to want Him. God invites, pursues, and waits, but never coerces.

Think about the doors in your life that might be closed to God right now. Maybe it’s shame that’s keeping you from opening. Maybe it’s anger or disappointment with how life has turned out. Maybe it’s just the busyness of keeping up appearances, the exhaustion of trying to be good enough on your own.

Whatever it is, know this: God is still knocking. Still inviting. Still offering the kind of friendship your soul was created for. And the door can open today.

- 1. What “doors” in your life might be closed to God right now?**
- 2. What would it take for you to open them and let Him in?**
- 3. How does it change things to know that God is waiting for your invitation, not your perfection?**

WEEK 3 - THURSDAY

The Joy of a Good Life *John 10:10 (NLT) "The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life."*

I was once in Rome's Termini station, overwhelmed and trying to figure out which platform I needed, when a man in an official-looking vest approached with a warm smile and offered to help with my luggage. Something felt off—maybe the way his eyes kept darting to my bag—so I declined and walked away. Later I went to the source of all knowledge, google, and learned about a pickpocket gang that works the area: they look official, seem helpful, get close, and relieve you of your wallet while you're distracted.

We learn to be suspicious of people who offer us something good. We've been burned enough to know that free help usually comes with a hidden cost. So when Jesus says He came to give us abundant life, we might be forgiven for thinking, "Right, but what's the catch?"

Jesus is crystal clear about His purpose: He came to give you life, not just existence, but abundant, rich, satisfying life, the kind that makes you wake up grateful, where joy isn't just an occasional visitor but a regular companion. This is what friendship with God looks like, not drudgery, not duty, not a burden you carry or a standard you can never reach, but life as it was meant to be lived, connected to the source of everything good.

Too many of us have settled for a version of Christianity that's all about avoiding hell or checking religious boxes. We've made following Jesus about what we can't do rather than what we get to experience. We've turned the gospel into bad news with a promise of future rescue rather than good news that transforms everything right now.

But Jesus says, "I came to give you the good life." Real friendship with Him isn't about losing yourself; it's about finding yourself, discovering what you were always meant to be and who you were always created to become. Think about the difference between religious obligation and authentic relationship. Obligation feels like wading through a bog in molasses, heavy, exhausting, sinking with every step. But relationship? It's like finally breathing freely after holding your breath underwater. It energizes, restores, makes you feel known and loved and free to be yourself. This is what God offers, not a system of rules that weighs you down, but a relationship that lifts you up, not a transaction where you trade behavior for approval, but a friendship where love flows freely and transformation happens naturally.

The "rich and satisfying life" Jesus promises doesn't mean life without problems. It means life with Someone who walks through problems with you, where you're not alone, not abandoned, not left to figure everything out by yourself, life connected to love, peace, joy, and hope even when circumstances are hard.

This is the good news: the God who created you wants friendship with you, and that friendship is the pathway to the life you've always wanted, not someday, not after you finally get everything right, but today, right now, just as you are.

1. **How has your picture of the Christian life been shaped by duty rather than delight?**
 2. **What would the “good life” Jesus promises look like for you practically?**
 3. **What’s one step you could take today toward experiencing more of the abundant life Jesus offers?**
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WEEK 3 - FRIDAY

Friendship, Not Force *Revelation 3:20 (NLT) “Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.”*

I remember being young and hearing the doorbell ring when my mum suddenly grabbed my arm and whispered, “Shh, be quiet.” I was confused—why were we hiding in our own house? When I asked, she peeked through the curtains and said, “They’re those people who go door to door arguing about Jesus. I don’t want to deal with this today.” “Who are they, Mum?” I asked. She said two letters and we sat in silence, waiting for them to leave.

How strange that religious people knocking on doors have trained so many of us to hide, to avoid any conversation about God at all costs. We’ve learned that people who show up uninvited to talk about faith usually want to pressure us, argue with us, make us feel inadequate. We come full circle to this image: God at the door, knocking but not forcing. This is crucial to understanding what kind of relationship God wants with you, friendship, not coercion, invitation not manipulation, choice not force.

Real friendship can’t be compelled, it can only be chosen, and God respects you enough to let you make that choice. He pursues you, yes, seeks you out, absolutely, makes the first move always, but He never forces His way into your life. He knocks and waits.

This is what separates authentic Christianity from toxic religion. Toxic religion uses fear and guilt and shame to control people’s behavior, it threatens and manipulates and demands compliance. But Jesus offers something entirely different: genuine friendship built on love, trust, and freedom. God chooses you as His friend, speaks your name, invites you into His life, and then He waits for your response, not because He’s playing hard to get, but because He wants you to want Him. He wants your yes to be real, unforced, chosen from a free heart.

Think about what this means. You don’t have to be afraid that if you mess up God will withdraw His friendship, you don’t have to perform perfectly to maintain His love, you don’t have to live in constant anxiety about whether you’re doing enough to keep God happy. God has already chosen you. The friendship is already offered. The door is already open on His side. The only question is whether you’ll open your side too, whether you’ll let Him in, whether you’ll say yes to the relationship He’s been wanting all along.

And here’s the beautiful truth: your yes doesn’t have to be perfect, it doesn’t have to be confident or eloquent or theologically precise, it just has to be honest—“Yes, I want to know You. Yes, I want this friendship. Yes, I’m opening the door.”

That's all it takes. One honest yes to the God who has been saying yes to you all along.

1. **How does knowing that God offers friendship rather than force change your understanding of relationship with Him?**
 2. **What fears or hesitations do you have about opening the door to God?**
 3. **What would your honest “yes” to God’s friendship look like today?**
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LEARNING TO LOVEWELL - WEEK 4

By Paddy McCoy

Crosswalk will be relevant in living out the ways of Jesus in our time and place.

WEEK 4 - MONDAY

With and Then Mark 3:13-15, ESV *13 And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. 14 And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach 15 and have authority to cast out demons.*

I fully admit, I'm a doer. I like to get things done, be on the move. In fact, I'm one of those kinesthetic learners, which means that I learn best while I'm moving. It tends to drive my wife, who already struggles from time to time with motion sickness, a little crazy because if I'm not moving, I'm bouncing my leg or doing something.

I'll share on week six that I've always identified more with Martha at the end of Luke 10, than with Mary. Martha was busy cooking and cleaning and being hospitable, while Mary sat at the feet of Jesus, in the posture of a disciple, listening to what he had to say. Both Martha and Mary are needed, but the order in which they are needed is important. Let me explain.

I believe the order of our end statements at Crosswalk was Spirit-led, in part because of End Statement 3 following End Statement 2. For in order to live out the ways of Jesus, we must first spend time being WITH Jesus.

My former mentor, the late Dr Jon Dybdahl, was the one that taught me this critical lesson.

Early on in our journey together, he opened up the Word to me and we walked through today's passage. He read it through once and asked me what Jesus appointed the disciples to do. Naturally, I replied, "preach and cast out demons," though admittedly I was nervous to affirm the command to cast out demons.

Jon replied, "Yes, but what were they appointed to do first?"

I looked again at the verse, read it through in my head a couple times, then with a tone of questioning myself I said, "be with him?"

"You got it," Jon said. "Our first job is to be with him. Out of that, grows everything else." He then connected these words to Jesus' in the Sermon on the Mount, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33, NIV)

If you and I are going to be "relevant in living out the ways of Jesus in our time and place," that starts by living with Jesus. As author, Leonard Sweet, once preached, "God cares more about our with-ness, than our witness, because everything comes from our withness."

I'm still a doer, but I try my best to make sure I spend time with Jesus, before I start doing things for Jesus. When I do, he makes me more open to the needs around me, ready to listen to him and to others, and then he shows me where to put my foot next as I seek to live out my life in service of his kingdom.

- 1. What are some of your favorite ways, or best practices, of spending time with Jesus?**
 - 2. What spiritual practices are harder for you or do you have more questions about?**
 - 3. Do you find it easier for you to be a listener, a doer, or are you able to balance both? If balance is hard, what helps you reset when you feel off balance?**
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WEEK 4 - TUESDAY

Being Relevant John 14:1-7, NLT **1** *"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. 2 There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? 3 When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. 4 And you know the way to where I am going."*

5 *"No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?"*

6 *Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. 7 If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!"*

"We have no idea where you are going..." I think I could put that bumper sticker on my car as I've said that to Jesus thousands of times. I like to know the plan, the start and the finish along with the steps in-between. Yet I often find that God gives me just enough light on my path to know where to put my foot next. I'd love him to light the whole path, but I regularly have to be reminded to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take." (Proverbs 3:5-6, NLT)

I think being relevant means to be in constant submission to Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life. To be willing to lay your agenda down for his, and to be so in tune with his heart, that your next step in this world becomes obvious.

The question is, how?

First of all, we have to keep our focus on Jesus. If our focus is simply on "being relevant," then we can easily forget to let Jesus lead. We can run off ahead of him in our attempts to "be relevant." This is when truth becomes relative to the conditions around us, and soon, we're standing on sinking sand instead of the rock of Christ.

Secondly, as we keep our focus on Jesus and where he leads us, we have to engage in active listening, both to Jesus and to the world around us. Active listening is when you engage closely and purposefully in a speaker's message, indicating understanding by asking relevant questions and using verbal and non-verbal gestures, cues, and summaries. Active listening could involve paraphrasing what someone has said to you, to help ensure you understand the message, or asking more questions to help you understand better. My favorite question in active listening only involves two words, "Say more."

We can actively listen to Jesus in our relationship with him through letting his word speak, guiding and shaping how we live our lives today. We can also actively listen to the needs of the world around us by asking questions, "Why are so many people angry? What is it about that movie that so many people are drawn to? How does our current political climate make you feel in your heart of hearts?" Asking these questions and truly seeking or listening for answers, is what helps us know what needs to meet, what itch to scratch, and how to make the biggest impact in the lives of those around us.

When we hunker and hide away from the world, then we can no longer reach those in the world. We can be in the world but not of it, but we can be in the world if we're not engaged in the lives of those around us.

When we keep our focus on Christ, listen to him first, and open ourselves up to his ways, then being relevant will come naturally as we participate in life with those with whom we live and work.

1. **When you struggle to trust God, what do you do, where do you turn?**
2. **Think about those you live and work with. What do you think worries them? What brings them joy? What kinds of activities are they drawn to and why? If you're not sure, would you be willing to ask them some of those questions today?**

WEEK 4 - WEDNESDAY

What is Truth? John 18:33-38, NLT **33** *Then Pilate went back into his headquarters and called for Jesus to be brought to him. "Are you the king of the Jews?" he asked him.*

34 *Jesus replied, "Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?"*

35 *"Am I a Jew?" Pilate retorted. "Your own people and their leading priests brought you to me for trial. Why? What have you done?"*

36 *Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world."*

37 *Pilate said, "So you are a king?"*

Jesus responded, "You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true."

38 *"What is truth?" Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the people and told them, "He is not guilty of any crime."*

Every time I read through the story of Jesus with Pilate, I always have compassion for Pilate. He was so intrigued by Jesus, and I believe his heart was even stirred, but he conceded to the crowd over the work of the Spirit.

And I don't know about you, but I've asked Pilate's same question, "What is truth?" more this year than in my entire life. The monumental and rapidly advancing technology of AI (artificial intelligence), has caused me to question more and more what is truth, what is even real? Though we're still early in the use of AI and you can still spot tells to help reveal what is or isn't real, the technology will only get better and the lines will be blurred more and more.

So what do we do? Yesterday's Scripture helps. We have to remember that Jesus, himself, IS the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Let's unpack this a bit more today, though, especially as it relates to truth?

One, it means that truth is a person, and that person is always on the move. He is not static, but progressive. We see this in his conversations with the disciples on the night before his crucifixion. He is teaching them more plainly than he has in the past, so much so that the disciples exclaim, "Then his disciples said, 'At last you are speaking plainly and not figuratively. Now we understand that you know everything, and there's no need to question you. From this we believe that you came from God.'" (John 16:29-30, NLT)

But Jesus didn't reveal everything to them that night. He had said, "There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now." (John 16:12, NLT) Jesus is so compassionate and continues to meet us where we are, in hopes to bring us nearer to him AS we are able and when we are ready. He doesn't overwhelm or force, "...he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent." (2 Peter 3:9b, NLT)

Thankfully, Jesus also didn't leave us to our own devices as we seek to continually understand his truths. He sent us a helper. "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me." (John 16:13-14, NLT)

In our faith tradition, we refer to this idea as Present Truth. It's honestly one of the reasons I am still an Adventist. This concept is a constant reminder that I don't know everything, and we will never have all the answers. Knowing this should keep us humble, on our knees, continually seeking. You see, our job is to continuously lean on Jesus and be open to his Spirit as she continues to reveal to us spiritual truths as we're ready to receive them. The moment we think we have all the answers, is the moment when we're in trouble. Thinking we have all the

answers is like saying to the Holy Spirit, “Thanks for leading us this far, but we can take it from here.”

I believe this posture of humility is what is needed for us to be “relevant in living out the ways of Jesus,” because likely those ways, and our approaches to reaching people for him, will change at times. What works today to communicate his truths and his love, may not work as well tomorrow. We must stay in his shadow, following wherever he leads if we are going to continue to learn, grow, and impact lives.

1. **Can you think of something you used to believe about Jesus, but now you believe something else, or you see things somewhat differently?**
 2. **What are some ways that you and I can stay humble, open to learn whatever the Spirit has to teach us when she, or we, are ready?**
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WEEK 4 - THURSDAY

Our Metrics for Success Galatians 5:22-23, NLT **22** *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!*

Recently, I was at a conference with high school Bible teachers, chaplains, youth pastors and summer camp directors. Though the focus of the conference was on discipleship, some of the seminars focused on the metrics they would use to measure success. What success? you ask. Well, in a school setting, a setting I was a part of for 18 years, you’re asking whether or not you are helping your students grow both spiritually and with an understanding of the unique call and beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist tradition.

Obviously, the spiritual growth aspect of success is very subjective. At the end of one of my presentations, I was asked what I use for metrics at my church to gauge whether or not people are growing spiritually.

I said that in the church world, we talk about all kinds of metrics like attendance, baptism, membership. And yes, those are good for certain things, but honestly, the metric I think is most powerful is whether or not people are growing in the fruit of the spirit. Are the people we are serving, teaching, and discipline becoming more loving, more joyful, more peaceful, and so on?

This is very hard to measure on the daily, but when you do see it, you know; it’s undeniable.

A few months ago, I was talking to a couple in my congregation after worship. They were explaining to me that they had recently been a part of a conversation where the other party in the conversation was criticizing Crosswalk. Though I don’t know exactly what the criticism was, it’s often along the lines of us not being a “real church,” or that “Crosswalk is just that lovey dovey church.” This couple started to get defensive, then told me they suddenly stopped. Then, they asked each other, “How do we respond in this moment, in a way that reflects

Jesus.” My heart leapt and my eyes began to water. This couple opened themselves up, in a very tense moment, to what the Spirit wanted to do through them. That, my friends, is fruit!

Then there’s the person who started coming back to church after over a decade away. Their past was full of church hurt and trauma, and though they wanted to get involved and plugged in, their heart was understandably fragile. Over time, I got to watch as God brought healing into their lives. Now, they are serving with joy and so excited to be a part of God’s work and community. That is fruit!

I often say, my job isn’t to fix anyone, it’s to repeatedly introduce them to Jesus and let Jesus go to work in their heart. Then, the only metric I get as to whether or not that is happening is the fruit of the Spirit. It doesn’t mean they’ll overcome all their struggles with sins, but fruit is proof that they are letting God work in their life.

We will know we are being relevant in living out the ways of Jesus, by the fruit, ours and those around us. So let us be good farmers for Christ, planting seeds, caring for the soil, and making sure people have access to the water of life.

- 1. Is there a fruit you are seeking after in your life right now, or one you have seen growth in as of late?**
 - 2. Where and in what ways do you see God at work in the world around you? How can you tell it’s God at work?**
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WEEK 4 - FRIDAY

Followers of the Way Acts 9:1-6, 19-20 **1** Meanwhile, Saul was uttering threats with every breath and was eager to kill the Lord’s followers. So he went to the high priest. **2** He requested letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, asking for their cooperation in the arrest of any followers of the Way he found there. He wanted to bring them—both men and women—back to Jerusalem in chains.

3 As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. **4** He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?”

5 “Who are you, lord?” Saul asked.

And the voice replied, “I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting! **6** Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

19...Saul stayed with the believers in Damascus for a few days. **20** And immediately he began preaching about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is indeed the Son of God!”

John 13:34-35

34 *“So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. 35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”*

I love the story of Paul’s conversion. It is so dramatic, such an about face, that it keeps your head spinning. Here was a guy hell bent on erasing the influence of a controversial former Jew named Jesus of Nazareth (I say former because he was supposed to be dead), who has an encounter and finds himself just days later telling everyone that this same Jesus is actually the Messiah. Wow!

Though there are all sorts of details we could talk about in this story, it’s the actual encounter with the risen Lord that gets me. Paul saw a light, the light turned out to be Jesus, and after that encounter he was blinded for three days. Likely, during those three days, the Holy Spirit is helping Paul connect all the dots that he hadn’t connected before. After the three days, his literal eyes, as well as the eyes of his heart, are opened and for the rest of his life, he was left with an “after-image” of Jesus.

An “after-image” is the phenomenon that happens when you look at a bright light for a second, then look away but you can still see an image of that light. That’s why we’re told to not look directly at the sun for long, because that after-image may never go away and we’d be literally blind.

But if you look at Paul’s life, he never seems to lose that image of Christ. He doesn’t lose it when he is beaten repeatedly for teaching Jesus, or shipwrecked, or kicked out of the synagogue.

My hope for all of us at Crosswalk is that each morning, we would spend time looking at the Son; studying his words, his life, his teachings. Then, with his image burned into our eyes, we’d go out into the world and represent him as his hands and feet. The proof that we are doing this? People will come to know us as his followers by our love, yes our love, they will know that we are Christians by our love.

- 1. Think back to your own conversion story, when you first came to believe about Jesus. It may not be dramatic like Paul’s, mine wasn’t, but when was it and what was it that first took your breath away about Jesus?**
 - 2. Do you think the movement of Jesus followers in North America is largely known for how we love? Why or why not? If not, how do you and I seek to change that perception?**
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LEARNING TO LOVEWELL - WEEK 5

By Paddy McCoy

Crosswalk will be a community that lives beyond herself by caring and advocating for the oppressed, powerless, and abandoned.

WEEK 5 - MONDAY

Lives beyond herself Acts 2:42-47, NLT **42** *All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.*

43 *A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. 44 And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. 45 They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. 46 They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— 47 all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.*

When I was in college, in addition to theology, I also studied Speech Communications. I was fascinated with all the ways you communicate, verbally and non-verbally, as well as the settings we do so, publicly, small groups, friendships, etc...

One of the areas of study that fascinated me the most, was the concept of semantics. The basic idea of semantics is that words don't mean anything, people attach meanings to words. For example, the word "run" has the most uses of a single word in the English language. You can run to the store, have a run in your tights, the Strawberry jam can run down your shirt, etc...

I bring this up because there is a phrase that has been controversial for some in the last decade when referring to the work of Jesus in His time, as well as His call for us in ours. That term is "social justice." For some, suggesting that Jesus was heavily involved in social justice issues of his day and that we should be too, comes under another interesting term that has become a trigger for many, woke.

But in reality, these are just words and it's us who attach meaning to them. So instead of jumping to any conclusions on what someone does or doesn't mean with the words they use, let's practice saying two of the most valuable words in the English language when put together, "Say more." If you don't understand or aren't sure what someone means with the words they use, ask them to, "Say more." It's an incredible gift, because how many people in your life actually want to hear you talk more? (is that just a me problem?)

Anyway, when you look at the life of Jesus, he was VERY involved in issues of social justice, if social justice means helping to right the wrongs of society. And I think we can all agree that

society is broken when it is made up of people, which last time I checked, it always is made up of people so therefore, it will always have brokenness.

This week, we will talk about some of the things Jesus did to address the social wrongs of his day. How we spoke to and gave room for women in his ministry, something not done in his time. When he gathered with the outcasts of society and fellowshiped with them. When he encouraged people to take care of the less fortunate around us, and challenge the religious folks to be more opening and loving. All of these were addressing social issues of his time.

We also see this effect in the incredible passage of what the early church looked like. Remember, the church is the new incarnation of Jesus in this world, His body, representing His presence. So when they “shared” their money with those in need, fed each other, communed together to encourage one another and meet each other's needs, they were representing the heart of Jesus.

Our call is the same today, and when we live this way, life takes on new meaning. An anonymous quote I like to share that relates to this says, “My life begins to have a point when I am no longer the point of my life.” If that doesn’t sound like the life of Jesus, I don’t know what does, “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:28, NLT)

1. **When you think of Jesus trying to right some of the wrongs in the society of his time, what stories or instances come to mind?**
 2. **What are some of the wrongs in our society that weigh heavy on your heart? What people/groups do you worry about and feel compelled to care for in some tangible way?**
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WEEK 5 - TUESDAY

Caring: What breaks your heart? Luke 7:11-15, NLT **11** *Soon afterward Jesus went with his disciples to the village of Nain, and a large crowd followed him. 12 A funeral procession was coming out as he approached the village gate. The young man who had died was a widow’s only son, and a large crowd from the village was with her. 13 When the Lord saw her, his heart overflowed with compassion. “Don’t cry!” he said. 14 Then he walked over to the coffin and touched it, and the bearers stopped. “Young man,” he said, “I tell you, get up.” 15 Then the dead boy sat up and began to talk! And Jesus gave him back to his mother.*

While estimates vary, there are at least over 2,00 verses in the Bible that discuss issues of social justice like poverty, compassion for the marginalized and oppressed, and fairness. Why? Because God loves ALL His children and longs for us to care for each other, in the same way He cares for us.

Remember Jesus’ words after He washed the feet of the disciples; **34** “So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.

35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” (John 13:34-35, NLT)

So, who or what breaks your heart? This is the perfect place to start when it comes to caring for those around us. And the perfect prayer for this sentiment, prayed by Bob Pierce, the founder of the non-profit organization, World Vision, that Crosswalk has partnered with in the past and will again in the future to help care for children around the world, says, "Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God."

We see Jesus' heart on full display in the story about the widow of Nain. Verse 13 says, "when the Lord saw her, his heart overflowed with compassion." In the Greek, the phrase means that Jesus was moved towards love and compassion from the deepest parts of Him. He couldn't help but act, because that's who he is. Why was that so important in this story?

He wasn't just weeping over a mother who lost her son. As a widow, it meant that her husband had also died, and with the boy being her only son, in their society, she would end up lost, destitute, cast out by society. Jesus didn't want to see that happen, and I don't think he wanted her without any family left. And so he performs the amazing, "impossible" miracle of resurrection.

There are other times when Jesus wept for the pain of others. That same heart, the huge heart of Jesus, was the part of him that broke on the cross. It broke for all the hurt and pain that sin brings into this world; hurt and pain that he never wanted us to have to experience, but hurt and pain that we chose over him.

So instead of leaving us to suffer the consequences of our own choices, he comes to suffer all of them for us. That's how much he loves us. His ask of us in return? Simple; be willing to do the same for others.

1. **Have you been "moved to compassion" for someone recently? If so, what was it and why do you think it moved you so?**
2. **If Jesus were to show up before you today, what in your life do you think would move him to act?**
3. **Try praying that prayer today, that your heart would be broken for the things that break God's heart, then just see what or who He opens you up to today.**

WEEK 5 - WEDNESDAY

Advocating: Giving Voice *Mark 12:41-44, NLT* **41** Jesus sat down near the collection box in the Temple and watched as the crowds dropped in their money. Many rich people put in large amounts. **42** Then a poor widow came and dropped in two small coins.

43 Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. 44 For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on.”

So often, the poor among us are also the invisible among us.

For 7 years, I brought a group of 30 college students to serve the houseless community in downtown Portland. As part of the journey, the ministry we partnered with would tell us how many of the houseless community feel unseen and invisible. We were told one of the most impactful things we could do as we served them, was to make eye contact, ask them their name, and call them by their name. For that brief moment, it would help them be seen and feel human again.

Jesus was always good and seeing those that society had stopped seeing; the lame man by the pool of Bethesda, the demon-possessed man hiding in the cliffs of Genessaret, the blind beggars sitting alongside the road, the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years, and even the children who came running up to him. Many in society had stopped seeing these people altogether. It was easier to pretend they weren't there than to have to deal with the discomfort of caring for them if they were there. But when stopped and took notice, he not only met their needs, he restored them to being human again.

We all have the opportunity to do that when we give voice to the voiceless and stand up for those that can't stand up for themselves. We do it when we see the invisible among us.

After our mission experience in Portland, we'd always debrief to see what students learned and would take away from their time. A common response was, “I never realized how many houseless people there were in the city.” Here's the thing, they houseless were always there, they just weren't seeing them before. Now they saw them.

In Mark 12, Jesus simply sat and watched the collection box outside the temple. I don't know if you've ever sat in a mall, or on a bench in a busy park, but people watching can be addicting. As Jesus watched, he noticed all the wealthy, who society always noticed, go to great lengths to make sure society continued to notice them. They'd drop large sums of money, coins, into the box. These drops would make lots of thunderous noise, much like the applause the wealthy wanted for their “sacrifice.”

But in the midst of the noise, an invisible, a widow, came up and very gently slid two small coins into that same box, hoping they didn't make a sound. She hoped to sneak in, and sneak out, unseen; the way she was used to living.

Ahh, but Jesus saw her. He always does. And he not only acknowledges her, he gives her high praise saying that she gave more than anyone, because she gave out of what she didn't have.

Jesus always gives voice to the voiceless, and he always sees those who feel invisible. He calls us to do the same.

1. Who are some of the invisible people in your world, or those that have no voice, that need one?
 2. Can you think of some ways we can help see the unseen?
 3. How do you think taking time to see someone who feels unseen, or unheard, helps to restore a little of humanity in them?
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WEEK 6 - THURSDAY

Oppressed, Powerless, and Abandoned - Wells or Fences? John 4:7-19, NLT **7** Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." **8** He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

9 The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"

10 Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."

11 "But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water?" **12** And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?"

13 Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. **14** But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."

15 "Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water."

16 "Go and get your husband," Jesus told her.

17 "I don't have a husband," the woman replied. Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband— **18** for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!"

19 "Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet. **20** So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?"

Church Planters and thought innovators, Alan and Debra Hirsch, talk in their book, *Untamed: Reactivating a Missional Form of Discipleship*, about the difference between building wells versus fences.

In the U.S., ranchers often build fences to help protect their livestock and keep them from roaming off or being stolen. My in-laws are ranchers in Eastern Oregon, and they spend a lot of time building and repairing fences.

But in Australia, the ranches are way too big for fences. Some of the ranches in Australia cover over 24,000 square miles. So instead of fences, they build wells that give the animals access to water. In their experience, the animals won't wonder far from their source of water.

Obviously, the difference between fences and wells is that fences are about protecting and keeping those that are already within the comfort of those fences. Wells, on the other hand, are open and accessible to all.

Pastor Tim Gillespie first shared this concept with me, and I've been taken by it ever since, especially as it relates to the woman at the well. You see, Jesus was offering her living water, and the woman kept putting up fences.

"You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman..." - Fences

Sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket." - Fence

"Tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship..." - Fence

She wasn't sure she could trust this Jew; however, Jesus wasn't going to let her get away with her fence building. He keeps knocking those fences down until she finally opens up to him and lets him in. And what happens when she does?

28 The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, **29** "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?" **30** So the people came streaming from the village to see him. (John 4:28-30, NLT)

When she finally opens herself up to what Jesus has to offer, to the living water, she goes and tells everyone that she can, trying to bring them to the well also, so they may drink freely.

There's a famous line that says, "I'd rather be excluded for who I include, than included for who I exclude." Jesus was all about building wells, and drawing all to him and the gift of life he had to offer. Yet we live in a world that loves to build fences and make barriers that help us more easily distinguish who is in, and who is out. But this fence building behavior is not kingdom-of-God work.

Jesus wants us all to have access to him, and it is up to us to stand up for and help make away for the most vulnerable, the most attacked, the most judged, the lost and alone in our communities to get to Jesus. So let us all pray for the power and courage to be in the well digging work, instead of the fence building work.

- 1. What are some of the ways we build fences in our communities today? What delineations do we make that tell people whether they are in or out?**
- 2. What do you think well-building looks like in our world today? In what ways do we clear the path for more people to connect with Jesus?**

WEEK 5 - FRIDAY

The Jesus Way Luke 15:1-2, NLT **1** *Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach. 2 This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that he was associating with such sinful people—even eating with them!*

Jesus includes those that society and religion often excluded, he saw the people we have often forgotten about, and he is always moved to compassion so much that he came down to this earth to save us all.

And all the issues we've mentioned this week, issues related to social justice, related to the poor, powerless, oppressed, abandoned and vulnerable among us, they are all important, but may we always remember that at Crosswalk, we fly one flag, and that flag is Jesus. Whatever causes we go after, whatever groups we advocate for, wherever the gospel takes us may we make sure that it is Jesus we are following, and not the causes themselves.

You've heard me say many times, the devil doesn't care what we're focused on as long as it's not Jesus. We can advocate so much for an oppressed group, that we begin to oppress and treat their oppressors badly. But is that the way of Jesus? We can be so focused on a cause that we can do a lot of things for Jesus, but none of them with Jesus, which can also be dangerous.

When I was a university chaplain, I can remember sitting in a meeting with a group of student leaders who were in charge of one of the student churches that took place on campus every week. During the meeting, the question was asked, "What are we going to do this week that is really cutting edge?"

I quickly piped up because I strongly felt that they were asking the wrong question, even though it came from a good place. I said, "Isn't it better to ask, 'Where is Jesus leading us this weekend?' Cause if he leads you to do something cutting edge, awesome, but if not, I guarantee you that you'll feel better following him, than the whims of trying to be cutting edge or received well by your peers."

Wherever we go, and whoever we advocate for, may we continue to do our best to make sure we're following Jesus, instead of running ahead of him and hope he comes after us. I promise you, he will lead us into places that will challenge us and make us uncomfortable, but they will also change our lives.

- 1. Have you ever found yourself in a season of doing a lot of things for Jesus, but not with Jesus? What was happening and did that ever change? If so, how?**
 - 2. What are some practical ways we keep Jesus at the center as our one and only flag, following wherever he leads?**
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LEARNING TO LOVEWELL - WEEK 6

By Paddy McCoy

Crosswalk will be a community that exemplifies servant leadership.

WEEK 6 - MONDAY

The Servant King John 13:1-6, NLT **1** *Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end. 2 It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. 4 So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, 5 and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.*

It has long been one of my favorite scenes in the life of Jesus. On the eve of what would be a horrific experience that no human can fully identify with, Jesus took the time to teach his disciples a critical lesson on what it means to live in the kingdom of God.

In context, the disciples were arguing about which of them was the best and most deserving of sitting to the right of Jesus when Jesus took his throne. I'm sure they through out their accolades, their pedigrees, their knowledge, talents, and special skills, to prove their case of which one of THEM was the most important in the room...next to Jesus of course.

Meanwhile, as they argued, their Lord, Savior, and King, stood up and walked over to the corner of the room. I'm guessing none of them even noticed as they continued their "conversation." Then, Jesus took a pitcher of water, and poured the water into a basin. Apparently, no servant in the house they were dining in had taken the time to perform the common act of hospitality.

However, this particular task wasn't performed by just any servant, it was often reserved for the lowliest servant in the house, which in a Jewish household would have been a Gentile servant. They would have been so low, that the Jewish owner wouldn't have even had a name for them.

And since they didn't do it, one of his disciples should have. However, they were too busy trying to prove which one of them was better than all the others.

So Jesus, God in the flesh, the maker of Heaven and Earth, took off his outer garment, wrapped a towel around his waste, and one by one started to wash his disciples feet.

The crowd hushed in silence and utter disbelief. What was Jesus doing? Why was he lowering himself in such a way? This task was beneath him, or was it? Was it beneath them, but for Jesus, continuing to pour himself out for the sake of others is exactly what he came to do.

Jesus communicated to them in this moment that there is NOTHING he wasn't willing to do to show them his love, and he would prove that beyond any shadow of doubt in the next 12 hours

as he went to the cross. Jesus taught them that in the kingdom of God, it's not about gaining and hoarding power, its about giving it away and serving one another...in love. This, is servant leadership. This, is our call.

1. **Think about your work. Is there a task that you feel is beneath you? If so, what and why?**
 2. **Knowing how much Jesus did to serve and to save every one of us, what is one thing you know someone in your life could use today? One way to show them God's love and his way of service in a practical, tangible, act?**
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WEEK 6 - TUESDAY

Give Glory Where Glory is Due John 13 **6** *When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"*

7 *Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will."*

8 *"No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!" Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me."*

9 *Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!"*

10 *Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you."***11** *For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean."*

12 *After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing?"* **13** *You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am.* **14** *And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet.* **15** *I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.* **16** *I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message.* **17** *Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.*

You can see how difficult it was for the disciples to receive this unimaginable act that Jesus was giving them. Peter, their self-professed spokesperson, was the first to protest. Peter knew he should be the one washing Jesus' feet, not the other way around.

Jesus needed Peter to understand that the moment was bigger than just the washing of the feet. Jesus desperately wanted Peter to know that his kingdom isn't about violence or gaining power and authority over others. Peter would continue to wrestle with these lessons as in just a few hours, he would pull out a sword to try to fight off the army who came to arrest Jesus. Jesus, instead, would heal the one Peter hurt and tell him to put his sword away. Then, afraid, confused, and lost, Peter would end up denying that he ever knew Jesus to a crowd of people standing outside Jesus' trial with the Jewish leaders.

Luke tells us that immediately after Peter's final betrayal, **61** *At that moment the Lord turned and looked at Peter...* **62** *And Peter left the courtyard, weeping bitterly.* (Luke 22:61-62, NLT)

I believe Peter finally came face to face with the gap between himself, and Jesus. He realized that no matter how hard he tried, how much he did, how "good" he was, he would never be able to close that gap. The only way forward was to exclaim he was nothing without Christ.

When we realize that what makes us special is Christ in us, the hope of glory, then we realize that our lives are not about gaining glory for ourselves, but pointing more people to Jesus. The apostle Paul once wrote, *"whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."* (1 Corinthians 10:31, NLT). We are to bring glory to God, not ourselves; attention to him, not us. That's what happens in servant leadership; we live our lives for Jesus and those he's called us to serve, not ourselves. That's what Jesus did for us. He poured himself out for us until there was nothing left; then came resurrection.

When we pour ourselves out for others, he will continue to give us life that we may continue to love, and to serve, for his honor.

- 1. Why do you think we're so obsessed with what others think about us?**
 - 2. How can we start today, making sure that our lives draw more attention to Jesus, than to ourselves, one kind act of love at a time?**
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WEEK 6 - WEDNESDAY

Martha, Martha, Martha Luke 10:38-42, NLT **38** *As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home.* **39** *Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught.* **40** *But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."*

41 *But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details!* **42** *There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."*

I will fully admit that as much as I want to be a Mary, I'm a full on Martha. I come by it naturally though, My mom is a Martha, as were both my grandmothers. We can run ourselves into the ground caring for others.

That sounds nice and all, but like Martha, if we're not careful, our desire to serve other people can turn into bitterness and resentment towards others that don't serve with the same intensity or passion that we do; even seeing other people as lazy.

Martha wasn't a bad person, she just momentarily forgot what mattered most. She forgot to plug into her reason for serving, to drink from the well of the water of life, so she had more life to give away. She was tired, exhausted, and had spent so much time on everyone else, that she forgot she had to care for herself in order to care well for others.

Jesus recognized it. The new living translation begins his response to her outburst about Mary by saying, "My dear Martha." The Greek text has him repeating Martha's name twice, which was a nod both to the importance of the moment, but also to a sense of tenderness and compassion. Jesus wasn't mad at Martha. He adored her and her service in this moment, but he recognized that in this moment, her priorities were out of place. He lifts up Mary's act of discipleship, sitting at his feet listening to what he had to say, as the most important thing. Spend time at his feet, Jesus was saying, and THEN, the service you give will come out of a deep well of living water.

I'm guessing almost all of us reading this today know what it's like to serve on fumes. We've given to friends, family, or our church until we had nothing left to give. If we pushed past that moment and kept serving, then likely, we got angry, bitter, and judgmental. "Why don't others give as much as I do?" "Why am I the only one who cares?" "What would happen if I stopped? I bet it would all fall apart; that would teach them."

If you're in a moment like this now, it is my prayer that you would hear Jesus' voice call out your name as he looks longingly and lovingly into your eyes. He'll invite you to come away with him and rest awhile, for he knows that time at the feet of Jesus will renew and refresh your heart and soul.

In Mark 3:15, when Jesus called his disciples to him, he appointed them first and foremost "to be with him." After that, he appointed them to do things. Let us not forget the importance of being with him, so we may serve for him, with a heart filled by him.

- 1. How do you feel about your time with Jesus? Is it good, or has it been a while? How's your heart?**
- 2. What is Jesus calling you to do for him today? Is it service, or is it sitting and listening? Maybe both?**

WEEK 6 - THURSDAY

Power Dynamics in God's Kingdom Matthew 20: 24-28, NLT **24** *When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant. 25 But Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. 26 But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. 28 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

We live in a world that is very concerned about who holds the power, and when we do hold the power, we love to lord it over others, flaunt it. “You have an army of 10,000, we have an army of 15,000.” “You have 50 nuclear warheads, we have 200.” Even the ideology behind Christian Nationalism, is that Christians need to be in power to be able to better influence the world around its set of beliefs and practices.

But the above passage from Matthew on the words of Jesus comes with an emphatic testament against seeking and hoarding power. It actually says that real power comes when you give it away, or use it to serve and lift up others to a place higher than yourself. That's the kingdom of God power.

Jesus didn't just talk the talk, he walked it, lived it, every step of his life, including the ones that led to his death. He was the king of the universe, the Lord of Lords, the almighty, all powerful one, yet he laid all that down to become human; and not just a human, a baby! Babies are the most powerless among us. The Creator of the universe became utterly dependent upon us, humans, to take care of him. And last I checked, the only thing we're really good at is messing up everything. Yet still, he trusted us with Himself.

So in the kingdom of God, it's not about initials behind your name, the amount of zero's in your bank account, or how many people answer to you at work. In the kingdom of God, it's about how many people were in need today that you helped, how many times you use your resources and influence to lift up someone else. It's so unlike the broken world that we live in, you might even say that living in the kingdom of God is like living in the upside-down, except this upside-down is good, holy, and true.

May we as a community of faith hold each other accountable to the way of Jesus and the kingdom of God. May we seek not to gain power to lord it over others, or flaunt it, but to give it away as a blessing. Jesus did it for us; seems like the least we could do is our best to return the favor.

1. **It has once been said that God created us in his image and we've been returning the favor ever since. Why do you think we love to seek and flaunt power over others instead of using our power to serve others?**
2. **What do you think we can do to help hold each other accountable to the way of Jesus, and how do we help each other serve like Jesus instead of hoard like humans?**

WEEK 6 - FRIDAY

Other Duties As Assigned Matthew 5:14-16, NLT **14** *“You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.*

We all know, and some of us dread, the line in our job descriptions that reads, “Other Duties As Assigned.” But I love this line.

I love it because if you really care about your job, and your call, then you don’t just do the minimum amount expected of you in your job description. You look for all sorts of other ways and opportunities that you can be a blessing to your coworkers, your customers, and your organization at large. And no task is beneath you. You are an employee of the company, there to help that company grow and be the best it can be.

Ever since I was a college chaplain, I’ve told those I’ve had the privilege of leading that I would never ask others to do something I wasn’t willing to do myself, first. One of the examples I used to use was cleaning up the pews in the church after the vespers program.

In the University where I worked, we shared the church sanctuary with the church community. So on Friday night, we had the sanctuary to do our vespers program which was the biggest program of the week for us. Anywhere from 500-1100 students would fill that space on Friday night. And my favorite time of the week, my favorite moment of ministry, was that time after vespers, when students would stay and hangout and connect for up to three hours after the program was done. It was in that room that walls would come down, hearts would open up, and real conversations would take place.

But once all that was said and done, we had to clean up the sanctuary and make sure it was ready for the church congregation the following morning. This was important work if we were going to be good partners in ministry. So I would often tell my student leaders that this responsibility fell to all of us, whether you were singing up front, speaking up front, or had a big role in the program Friday night or not. None of us were “above” picking up trash, reorganizing pews, and putting pens back in place.

This, to me, is the spirit of Servant leadership; other duties as assigned. What if we all lived into this truth no matter what role we played at church, at work, or how busy our weeks were at home. What if we stepped into all the places we inhabit with a willingness to serve and do whatever it takes to care for another person and to lift up Jesus? Don’t you think this world would be a better place if we let our light shine for all to see, so that others may see our good works and praise our Father in heaven? I do, and I am 1,000% sure it’s worth a try.

- 1. What are some of the tasks or responsibilities you do at work that are not specifically outlined in your job description? How about at your church?**
 - 2. What is one task, or way you could go the extra mile in serving someone today, whether that someone is a friend, a family member, or a coworker?**
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