

Kingdom Discipleship-VP

Let me ask you: **Have you ever considered that someone needs your help?** You have walked through situations and trials that put you in a unique position to help others through a particularly difficult time. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 1.3-4, affirms this when he writes: ³ *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."* **Have you ever considered that someone needs you to listen to them? Have you ever considered that someone is waiting for just one person to show an interest in them, in who they are, in their hopes and dreams, in their disappointments and failures? Have you ever considered that you need to be transparent so that others are more comfortable to be transparent? Have you ever realized that if you have done any of these things that are you pouring your life into another?**

Paul and his co-workers in the gospel sincerely devoted themselves to pouring their lives into church at Thessalonica. We see this as he reminded them: *"We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our lives as well"* (1 Thessalonians 2.8).

Why were they so determined? Certainly, Thessalonica had been no easy place for Paul to minister. A mob, no less, had come for them, but were unable to find them. So Paul also reminded them: *"With the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition"* (1 Thessalonians 2.2, Acts 17.1-7).

Paul and his co-workers were busy men. They not only evangelized and discipled in Thessalonica, but they also had to work to support themselves. They, like those they were helping—and like us today—had to spend much time simply making a living. Paul said, *"Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone"* (1 Thessalonians 2.9).

So why *did* they give their lives to the Thessalonians? Listen again to Paul: *"You know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting, and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory"* (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12). Paul loved this church as a father. They were his children in the faith.

God's purpose was Paul's purpose—that God's people be molded into Christ's image and learn to live as worthy citizens of Christ's kingdom. And guess what? God doesn't do this in a vacuum. Rather, God uses *people* to do this—people like Paul and people like you and me.

Let me remind you, we have been going through each of these topics like a grid. The GRID series is to encourage and equip women to consider how their lives could be shaped by building a grid that lays truth upon truth. The end result is viewing life through the lens of a Christian world and life view. The GRID is to help women think biblically and live covenantally.

We began learning about The GRID starting with Foundations: God is our reference point. God's Word is our authority. God's glory is our purpose. And God's presence is his promise. Then we looked at Covenant, Church, Biblical Womanhood, and now we are looking at Kingdom Discipleship.

Discipleship is the making of a disciple, a learner. It is pouring into another person, teaching them knowledge and wisdom so that they have a changed life. Kingdom discipleship is focusing on building God's kingdom.

Marcie Tuten in the podcast on Kingdom Discipleship describes the kingdom in this way. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven. It is such a little thing, but it changes everything. (Once you add leaven,) you can't take it out. It permeates the whole batch. (And so it is with the Kingdom of heaven.) It permeates everything and results in change. The goal is transformation, to be more like Jesus. And that's what we want for the people who walk alongside us."

1. The biblical model of discipleship is this: The content of the gospel taught in the context of covenant relationships that validate the gospel. The content (topics, parts, subject matter) of the gospel is taught in the context (the setting) of covenant relationships that validate (authenticate) the gospel. In other words,
 - If the content is not tethered to a relationship, it will be academic. The content will be head knowledge rather than heart knowledge. The content of the gospel is to permeate all of life.
 - If the relationship is not governed by the content, it will be anemic.¹ The relationship will not be gospel-centered, rather man-centered.

Let's take a look at the content. What is that? I think we can go back to our beginning point: Foundations.

God is our reference point. Why would we make God our reference point? God is: Holy, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Righteous, Perfect, Glorious, Infinite, Eternal, Immutable, Sovereign, Love, Gracious, Good, Just, Merciful, Compassionate, Faithful, Matchless. He's worthy of all worship, now & forever. He alone is God. He is the Creator and Sustainer the universe. If you are breathing now, thank God, for every breath you take comes from him.

Making God our reference point is our first priority. As my pastor Harry Reeder said: "God is not first on our list, he is the list." Everything in our life is oriented to him.

¹ [*Thinking Biblically, Living Covenantally*](#), p.58.

Of the ten commandments, which is listed first? *“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me”* (Exodus 20:2-3).

“You shall have no other gods before Me.” Nothing in life is to come before the Lord our God. Not our own desires and ambitions, not our family, not our work, not our recreation, not our friends, not even our church. Nada, nothing, absolutely nothing is to come before the Lord. Not only is he to come first in our lives, he is to be. our. life (Col 3.4).

If God is our reference point, then his Word is our authority. Remember, God’s goal for his people is transformation, being conformed to the image of his Son. Paul instructs the church in Rome: *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will”* (Romans 12.1-2).

Believers are transformed as they renew their minds with God’s Word. His Word does not return void (Isa. 55.11-12). *“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Heb 4.12). ¹⁶“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work”* (2 Tim 3.16-17).

Let’s look more closely at 2 Tim 3.16. *“All Scripture is profitable,”* meaning it is useful, helpful, beneficial. God lists 4 ways Scripture is profitable.

1. **The Bible is profitable for doctrine. Another word for doctrine is teaching.** What is doctrine? What is the teaching that is profitable? According to *Logos Bible Software Factbook*: “Doctrine is the body of teachings of the Christian faith concerning its central beliefs: the deity of Christ, salvation by God’s grace and not by works, salvation through Jesus Christ alone, the resurrection of Christ, the Gospel, monotheism and the Holy Trinity.

How do you learn doctrine? Are you daily studying the Scriptures? Is it a regular part of your diet? Are you meditating on the WOG? Are you carrying the Word into your life circumstances? Is the Bible transforming your life? Do you think, speak, and act differently as God’s Word and Spirit work in you? Are you listening to sound preaching that includes the whole counsel of God?

2. **The Bible is profitable for reproof.** Reproof exposes that you have been compared to the standard (the doctrine, the teaching) and have come short. Although we are no longer under the curse and penalty of the law, we obey the law because we love Jesus. In fact, obedience is how we demonstrate our love. So, the law of God serves as a mirror and shows us as we really are.

In what areas of your life are you falling short of the standard of God's Word? Are you being obedient to what God has shown you in his Word? Is God's Word your only rule for faith and life?

3. **The Bible is profitable for correction.** This involves closing the gap between where we are and where God wants us to be.

As you read and study Scripture, you should ask, "What does this truth reveal to me about what is to be corrected? How will that correction take place in a way that is consistent with who God is and the provision he has made for me in Christ?"

4. **The Bible is profitable for training in righteousness.**

How do we faithfully put God's standard into practice? What change does God want us to put into practice in our thoughts, words, and deeds? In what ways and in what situations am I not thinking, speaking, and acting righteously?

These 4 points make clear that the Scriptures call for a life of self-examination that leads to orthodox beliefs, confession and repentance of sin, movement towards God, endurance during trial, and an intentional pursuit to know God through his Word and in submission to his Spirit.

Be honest, do we normally approach the Word in this way? Or, do we inhibit God's Word in our lives because we don't want to examine our lives too closely? Do we just want to move on? As a result, are there gaps in the things we say we believe and in how we actually live? **Are we making God's Word our ultimate authority?**

God's Word is our content and should permeate our lives, transforming how we live, our thoughts, words, and deeds.

Now let's look at the context of covenantal relationships that validate the gospel.

The third foundation, God's glory is our purpose. If **God's glory is our purpose** is to be true, we must go back to our first priority: God is our reference point. A second priority is to live lives worthy of God (1 Thess 2:12). Where does this start? ... *"be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect"* (Romans 12:2).

A renewed mind is saturated and ordered by the Word of God. The renewed mind is a mind changed by the work of the Word and the Spirit. One commentator writes: "The mind renewed by the Spirit is able to discern the good, the pleasing, and the perfect purposes of God with a

view to aligning their own attitudes and values with it.”² In other words, one who is led by the will of God is more and more conformed to Christ’s likeness. He/she is one who, out of love for Christ, wants to obey him. Again, obedience is not out of compulsion or to gain favor but out of love. And what were Jesus’ last words to his disciples? “Go, and make disciples...”

[Is there a better way to give God glory than through proclaiming the gospel and making disciples?](#) This was how the Good News is spread to all the nations. And discipleship is how it is shared from one person to another through relationships. This happens as one believer comes alongside another believer to witness to them, pray with them, study the Bible with them, and fellowship with them. The process of maturing in faith and becoming more like Christ is discipleship. Discipleship happens as you are connected to other followers of Jesus. Both Jesus and Paul shared the gospel and their lives as well with their disciples.

The apostle Paul writes:

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (Ephesians 4:14–16, NIV)

[What is a benefit of discipleship within the context of covenantal relationships?](#) It protects you from false views of God, from Satan’s attempts to isolate you with your own thoughts and feelings, and from the constantly shifting ideas of culture. Because of these temptations, at times, are you confused as to what you are to think? You know what you are to do, right? Get in God’s Word and get with God’s people.

God created His followers to follow Him and become more like Him in community. Some may have told you falsely that if you put your faith in Christ, you would have a life of ease and pleasure, health and prosperity. No. The Christian life is a battleground, it is warfare, it is a marathon. You will stumble and fall on your journey of faith. You will face difficulty, pain and loss. Jesus promised His followers they would. As that happens, you need others around you to remind you of the truth of the gospel: the good news of Jesus *that while we were sinners, Christ died for us* (Romans 5:8). The beautiful truth is that *the righteous person falls seven times and gets back up* (Proverbs 24:16).

When everything is going as it should, Christian community becomes a place where people are using their gifts to help each other grow, and the combined use of these gifts contributes to a

² Bird, M. F. (2016). [Romans](#) (S. McKnight, Ed.; p. 416). Zondervan.

culture that makes discipleship possible. And even when things become difficult, Christian community can be a place where we experience and live out forgiveness and reconciliation. In all of this, discipleship is a part of the process as we follow Christ together and as we are discipled and disciple others along the way.

Christian community is such a critical element of discipleship that the writer of the book of Hebrews says, *“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another”* (Hebrews 10:24-25, NLT).

Discipleship happens as the members of the church serve and encourage one another as well as other people. When you opt out of Christian community, you’re opting out of a process that Jesus uses to encourage your maturity, assist in the growth of others, and impact the world.

So, ask yourself: What does it mean to bring glory to God? Is your purpose in life to bring God glory in what you think, say, do, watch, read, listen to? Are there things in your life that need to be cast aside? Are there things that need to be added to your life to give God glory? Do you know your spiritual gifts? Are you using them for God’s glory and for the building up of the church? How about your relationships? Does there need to be forgiveness and reconciliation? Are you walking the Christian life alongside others, or have you become a lone ranger? Are you intentionally investing your life in others? Are you entrusting what God has given to you to those who are faithful to give their lives away?

Finally, God’s presence is his promise. What were Jesus’s final, final words? *“And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age”* (Mt 28.20). As you struggle at times to keep God as your reference point, he is with you. As you seek to know him through his Word, he is with you. As you strive to live a life in obedience to Christ, your first love, giving him glory, he is with you. As you seek to walk alongside others in your Christian journey, he is with you.

Do you believe this?

Your faithful God is with you. He will hold you fast.