

January 23, 2021

NORTH METRO CHURCH

NMC SERMON SERIES CONTENT



What's The Point?

January 2 - Gather Purposefully

January 9 - Serve Selflessly

January 16 - Connect Deeply

January 23 - Influence Daily

January 30 - Give Generously

February 6 - Love Globally

“INFLUENCE DAILY”



Discussion Questions:

As Rob taught on the idea of “Influencing Daily,” he used the BLESS method from Dave & Jon Ferguson’s book called BLESS to show us how to live this message out. The following small group questions have been adapted from the book “BLESS.”

Unpacking B.L.E.S.S.

1. BEGIN IN PRAYER

As we pray, our own hearts are cultivated and God prepares us to see opportunities to join Him in helping people connect with Jesus. As he brings about this awareness in us, He will also begin to equip us to do this work. We begin to see our opportunities and abilities grow as we pray that God would use us.

Read Colossians 4:2-4

Why do you think Paul prayed for “open doors” as opposed to creating his own doors for the message to be received? What is the difference between the two?

What do you think our role is in seeking out open doors? Can we passively wait for them to be revealed to us or do we need to take action in order to find open doors for our message?

Why do you think being in prayer is the first of the BLESS practices?

Action Step:

Take some time to think about friends, relatives, acquaintances, neighbors, and colleagues who do not know God. Ask God to bring to mind 3 to 5 people to pray for daily.

Here are some ways you can pray for these individuals: (Insert the person’s name that you’re praying for in the blank)

Pray for _____ to become thirsty for God. (*John 7:37-39*)

Pray for _____ to become open to change. (2 Corinthians 7:10)

Pray for _____ to clearly experience God's love. (1 John 4:7-10, 19-21)

Pray for _____ to develop deep spiritual rootedness in Christ. (John 15:5; Colossians 2:6-7)

Just as we are praying for others, here are some ways we can be in prayer for ourselves.

Pray that you would trust in the Lord and not try to bless others through your own strength. (Proverbs 3:5)

Pray that God would open a door for the message to be heard. (Colossians 2:3)

Pray that God would provide opportunities to speak boldly. (Acts 28:31)

2. LISTENING

Listening with compassion means we don't just hear the words someone is saying to us. We are active listeners who begin to understand the needs this person has, the past that has shaped their present, and how we might be able to bring the hope of Jesus into their life. Listening with compassion requires more than just a listening ear—although that is very important. It also requires a heart that is open to using these conversations to be a blessing to others.

Who is the best listener you know? What makes them a good listener? How does that person make you feel?

Read Mark 9:14-27

Jesus seemed to have a way of asking questions to help people tell their story and reveal their heart. In Mark 9:21, Jesus asked a father whose son suffered with seizures, "How long has he been like this?" Do you think that Jesus knew the answer to this question? Why did Jesus ask it?

What are some questions that we could use to draw out stories from someone, especially as it relates to their spiritual journey?

Action Step:

Spend some time thinking through your week. Are there any places in your schedule that can be made available to "listen with compassion?" Here are some ideas and space to add more of your own:

- Take a walk around your neighborhood with the intention of striking up a conversation if the opportunity presents itself.
- If you find yourself waiting for an appointment, standing in line at the store, or on the sidelines of a sporting event resist the urge to pull out your phone. Instead, seek opportunities to engage with the people around you.
- If you are feeling inconvenienced by a neighbor, family member, friend, or stranger, ask God to show you how to take time to "listen with compassion."

3. EAT

When we sit around a table and share a meal with others we have the opportunity to move a relationship from acquaintance toward friendship. The table can be a great equalizer. Everyone has a place and an opportunity to be heard and known while sharing in the intimacy of a meal. Eating together provides an opportunity to develop relational bridges, discover people's stories, and discern the next steps in helping them connect with Jesus.

Read Luke 5:27-32

Why do you think Levi felt the need to throw a party with Jesus invited as the guest? Wouldn't you think he would have set up a lecture hall for his friends to listen to Jesus? What is so important about this relational component leading the way?

How did Jesus' posture toward tax collectors like Levi ultimately result in them leaving behind their sinful ways and following him? What can we learn from his example?

Jesus was obviously able to associate with sinners without sinning. What needs to be in place in our own lives so that we can do the same?

Why is the practice of hospitality and eating together so powerful?

How can the BLESS practices we have discussed so far be brought into "eating together?" How could they deepen the time spent together over a meal?

Action Step:

Eat with someone this week! Here are some ways to do it:

- Invite a neighbor or friend over for dinner.
- Ask a colleague out for lunch.
- Ask a friend you are praying for to go out for coffee.
- Buy ingredients for ice cream sundaes and invite neighbors over for an ice cream party.
- As the holidays draw near think of someone you could invite to your family celebrations.
- Organize a block party or neighborhood gathering.

4. SERVE

When we serve in love, we have the opportunity to introduce people to Jesus. Sometimes our service looks very practical—shoveling someone's driveway, bringing a meal during sickness, or helping to complete a home improvement project. Other times our service looks more like being present during moments of crisis or being willing to answer the hard questions someone has about faith.

There are several examples in Scripture of people helping others meet Jesus by serving in love. Choose one or two of these passages to read as a group. As you read these verses, why is it so important that we serve others in love?

- Jesus Heals Many (Mark 1:32-34)
- A Blind Man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26)
- Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man (Matthew 9:1-2)
- Jesus Raises a Dead Girl (Matthew 9:18-19)
- A Demon-Possessed Man (Matthew 9:32-33) • The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

In our current culture, what perceptions do people have about Christians? How can our serving in love impact the perceptions people have of Christians? How can it impact the perceptions of the people on our prayer list?

What are some of the hesitations or barriers we may have when it comes to serving others in love? In what ways can we overcome these barriers?

Action Step:

There are so many ways that we can serve others in love. Take some time to think of ways that you can serve the people on your prayer list.

5. STORIES

Stories hold a lot of power. They have the power to change opinions, create empathy, provide clarity, and bring transformation. Our personal stories are unique and essential tools in helping others understand how Jesus impacts lives in real and tangible ways. Through stories, people can begin to believe that change is possible and hope is personal. They can start to understand what love looks like and that true, lasting, selfless love can be theirs to experience through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Why do you think stories are so powerful? In what ways do stories help build relationships?

What unique experiences, perhaps hard and difficult, has God given you that help you identify and connect with other people?

There is a way to tell a life story where we are the heroes, and another way to tell the story with God as the hero. Which is more common? Which is more truthful?

What might keep us from sharing our story? Fear of rejection? The feeling that our story isn't "powerful enough?" Other?

Action Step:

When you think about the people on your prayer list, what story from your own life, or the lives of others, could you share that would help them understand the transforming power of Jesus?

Take time to think about and write down some stories from your life. Think about how God has worked in the situations where you have experienced pain, hopelessness, or fear. What did your life look like before, during, and after these specific times? How did Jesus meet you during these times?

Pray that God would give you an opportunity to share a story with the people on your prayer list that would help them understand the transforming power of Jesus. Pray that He would encourage you to seek out and take advantage of these opportunities even when it means stepping outside of your comfort zone.

Looking back at this week's teaching and study, is there one thing you'd especially like to remember this week?

Do you have any prayer requests for your group?