

MASTERPLAN THREE

GOD'S STRATEGY TO REACH EVERYONE

From the previous studies, what were God's purposes in the Earth and what was our part in them?

For some, having a strategy for being involved in God's purposes feels very unspiritual. However, if we're to obey the Great Commission we must think practically because obedience is relentlessly practical. God has given us a clear strategy in the Bible which both Jesus and the apostles followed. Strategy without authentic spiritual life is dead. But to not be practical about how we will obey God is spiritualised disobedience. To not obey God is to miss out on sharing in his heart and purposes and to waste our life.

Read through the passages from 1 THESSALONIANS and 2 TIMOTHY and then reread them a paragraph at a time discussing the questions as you go:

1 THESSALONIANS 1v1 Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you. We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

4 For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.

5b You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, your faith in God has become known everywhere

Verses 1-3

What were the foundations of the church?

What do we learn about Paul's ministry?

What motivated the believer's service?

How did these motivations affect what they did?

Verses 4-5a

What are the authenticating marks of new life?

Authentic, vital spiritual life is the basis of our involvement in God's purposes.

Verses 5b-8a

How did Paul make disciples?

How many generations of influence are recorded?

Why did the church have such a big impact?

Paul poured his life into the believers in the city. They in turn did the same for the other believers in the region and this mobilised enough people to get the gospel to everyone.

8b Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

Verses 8b-10

What marked the believers?

To be an ambassador for Christ, it's not enough to just live the life or just proclaim the gospel. We have to do both together.

The church in Thessalonica is a good example of spiritual multiplication. Addition is where we introduce people to Christ one at a time. If you were to lead a thousand people to Christ every day it would take 16500 years to reach the whole world. If the world population doubled in that time, so would the time taken to reach everyone.

Multiplication is where we introduce someone to Christ (win), then teach them to follow Jesus moment by moment as a way of life (build) and equip them to do with others what we've done with them (send). If we spent a year focussing on winning, building and sending three people and at the end of the year, all of us did the same with three more people then there would be four of us multiplying. If we replicated this pattern of winning, building and sending every year we would reach and disciple the world in 17 years. If the population doubled in that time it would take an extra year to reach everyone. It's this principle of multiplication that allowed Paul's involvement in Thessalonica, starting with no believers at all, to have a huge impact that reached a whole region. The same principle can be seen in 2 TIMOTHY:

2 TIMOTHY 2v1

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

How many generations of disciples can be seen in this example?

What instructions do we have about who to invest in?

In the strategy of spiritual multiplication, the 4th Generation of disciples is very significant. I can invest in a few people and help each of them to reach a few others and this would reach three generations. However, the ministry could still be dependent on me. In order to get to the fourth generation, the second generation (i.e. those I'm directly investing in) have to fully embrace the vision of multiplication and be equipped and intentional about what they're doing.

When this happens, I'm not simply teaching people to use tools to help them make disciples. Multiplication is in the genes of what's being passed on. I'm multiplying people who are fully aware of what I'm doing and are learning to do the same. The impact is no longer dependent on me but has been set free to become a movement that can have an impact far beyond my sphere. A multitude of people are being developed who are envisioned and equipped to change the world. This is what happened with Jesus and his 12 disciples and with Paul in as we saw above.



Critical to this kind of exponential growth is that the way we make disciples is transferable. In other words, what we do with people is very simple so that it can easily be passed on. If what we do is too “clever”, then people will not feel confident to copy what we’re doing. As we saw with Paul, he modelled a life to those he knew and invited them to imitate him. These people became a model to others and so on and the results were explosive. Clear strategy can never substitute for authentic spiritual life, but spiritual life with clear strategy can change the world!

What are your reflections on what we’ve looked at in this study?

Would you like to be involved in spiritual multiplication? Why or why not?

What experience have you had of others investing in your life?

What would be involved practically in you being involved in multiplying to and through others?

In what areas would you need to grow if you were to be a model that others could imitate?

Who has God brought into your life that you could begin to help follow Jesus?

The world around us is dying. God is rescuing and transforming a people who will be with him forever and through whom he can bless the world. The division between those who are part of God’s new creation and those who will face eternal judgement is the gospel of Jesus Christ. We’re commissioned to bless the world by announcing and demonstrating the saving message of death and resurrection of Jesus.

There’s no other hope for our world than the gospel with which we’ve been entrusted. In these studies we’ve sought to clarify what God is doing in the world and how he wants us to be involved. We’re not simply invited to understand this, but to enter in to the purpose and heart of God by obeying his commission to make disciples. Will he find in us willing hearts and obedient lives?

