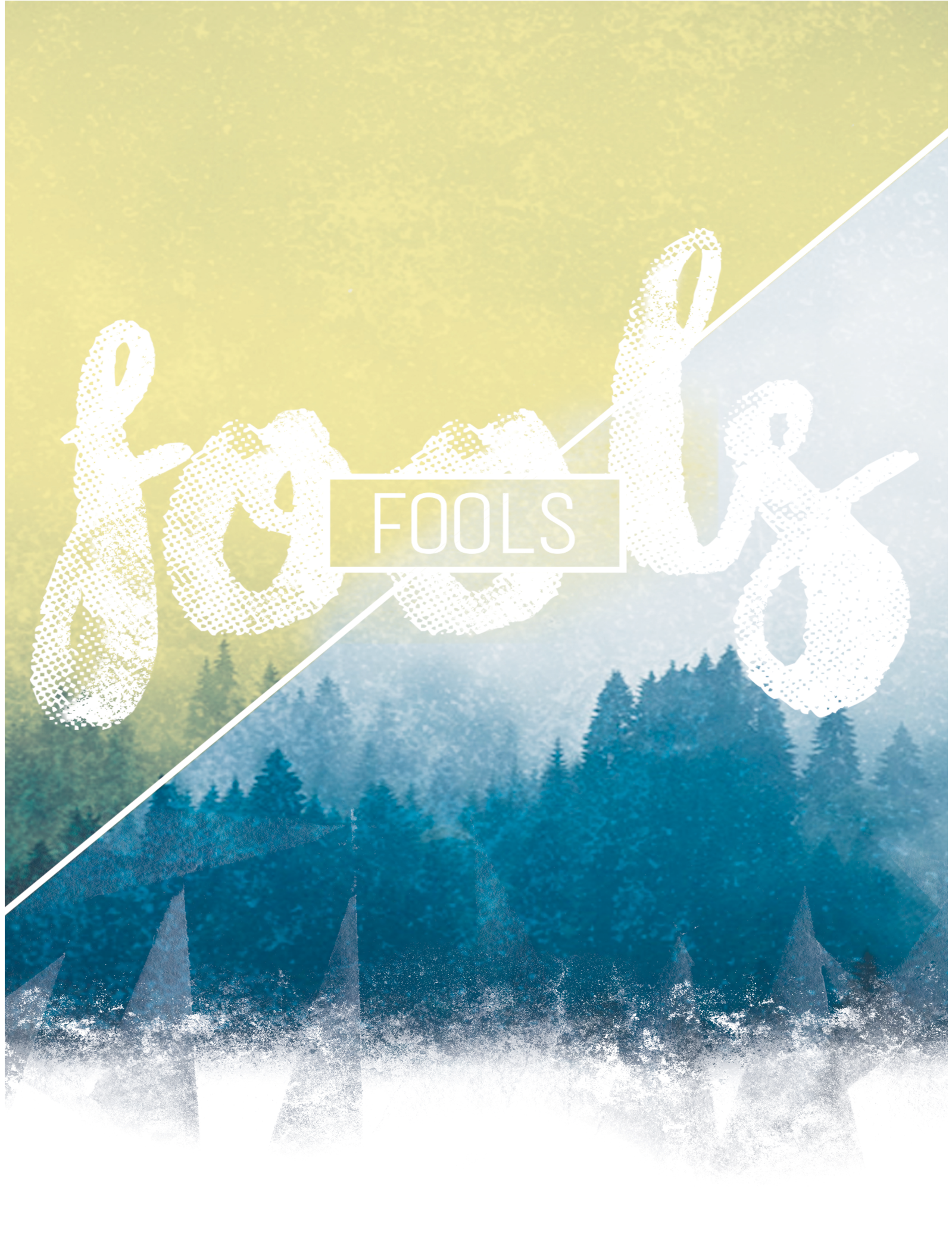


FOOLS

fools



# fools

There has been a movement that began over 2,000 years ago. It was started when Jesus invested in 12 men. Then after His death and resurrection, 11 of those men unleashed this movement in the world around them and the world has never been the same since.

When you look around at the world though it is often hard to see the effects of this movement. And definitely when we read scripture we often long for and wonder why we do not see moves of God like we read about in His word. There are many reasons for this but I think that one is that we have strived to hard to be normal. We try to blend in and fit in and therefore are not standing out as a light for Christ like we have been called to.

I have thought this for a while and then believed it even more when I read how Paul described him and his fellow workmen. He called them fools. They stood out so much and lived in such contrast to the world that they did not understand. So there was no better way to describe themselves then as fools. We need more fools in the world. This is why this study is devoted to understanding what it means to be a fool and what that life looks like. Here is how the study will break down.

LESSON 1: FREE IN CHRIST

LESSON 2: ON A MISSION

LESSON 3: OPEN HEARTS AND OPEN EYES

LESSON 4: LOVING COMMUNITY

LESSON 5: SELFLESS

I hope this study will bring you as much joy and conviction as it did for me in writing it. And I hope that it will spark a movement in the lives of those who you study it with that will spread all over the world.

# fools

SESSION ONE

In the mid 1970s two men came together and started a revolution that would not only change the world but also the way we live in it and interact with it. These two men were Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs. They founded Apple computers with the crazy vision that the computer would be something that ordinary people would use and that just about every person would own one. What is strange about this vision though is that everyone thought they were crazy. Time and again people, including those that ran the major technology companies of the day, would say, “What would ordinary people want with computers?” Well they stuck with it and not only founded a wildly successful company but also changed the world.

But there was an even greater revolution that happened 2,000 years ago. This happened when Jesus, the Son of God, came to Earth to die for our sins and show us how to live. He lived a perfect life, died for our sins, and rose from the dead so we can be forgiven and have a relationship with God. Along the way Jesus invested in 12 men, 11 of which would go on to lead a movement like we have never seen that completely changed the course of history. They too faced incredible opposition but were just crazy enough to believe that Jesus was who He said He was, He did what He said He'd do, and that they must be obedient to do what He commanded. And in the process the world was turned upside down and our lives have been changed.

One of the people who come along side those 11 men and join in this movement was Paul. In case you do not know who Paul is, he was formerly known as Saul and had been a leader in the Jewish church. He had devoted himself to killing Christians and ending this new movement. On his way to do just that, kill Christians, Jesus appeared to Saul in a great light and asked him, “Saul, why are you persecuting me?” Saul was blinded. But in the process of meeting Jesus his life was changed. His name was changed to Paul and he would go on to spread the Gospel all over the known world, planting churches and writing most of the New Testament.

In one of these writings Paul referred to himself and others who were doing the work he was doing as “fools.” In case you do not believe me you can read it for yourself.

*<sup>9</sup> FOR IT SEEMS TO ME THAT GOD HAS PUT US APOSTLES ON DISPLAY AT THE END OF THE PROCESSION, LIKE THOSE CONDEMNED TO DIE IN THE ARENA. WE HAVE BEEN MADE A SPECTACLE TO THE WHOLE UNIVERSE, TO ANGELS AS WELL AS TO HUMAN BEINGS. <sup>10</sup> WE ARE FOOLS FOR CHRIST, BUT YOU ARE SO WISE IN CHRIST! WE ARE WEAK, BUT YOU ARE STRONG! YOU ARE HONORED, WE ARE DISHONORED! <sup>11</sup> TO THIS VERY HOUR WE GO HUNGRY AND THIRSTY, WE ARE IN RAGS, WE ARE BRUTALLY TREATED, WE ARE HOMELESS. <sup>12</sup> WE WORK HARD WITH OUR OWN HANDS. WHEN WE ARE CURSED, WE BLESS; WHEN WE ARE PERSECUTED, WE ENDURE IT; <sup>13</sup> WHEN WE ARE SLANDERED, WE ANSWER KINDLY. WE HAVE BECOME THE SCUM OF THE EARTH, THE GARBAGE OF THE WORLD. RIGHT UP TO THIS MOMENT.*  
*1 CORINTHIANS 4:9 - 11 NIV*

WHAT DO YOU THINK PAUL IS SAYING IN THIS PASSAGE?

DO YOU SEE YOURSELF AS MORE LIKE THE APOSTLES OR LIKE THE CHURCH IN CORINTH?

At first reading of this passage I assumed Paul was jealous of the other Christians and the “good” life that they had. I thought that somehow Paul was worn out and needed a break, or had decided that the work he was doing was not worth it anymore. I mean he says that he is a fool and that the others are wise. That means the other Christians are living the right way, correct? But then I remembered how when we come to Christ things are different. That we live in complete opposite to the way the world thinks that we should live. I realized that being a fool is a good thing. What allowed me to believe this even more was reading Paul’s next letter to the Corinthians.

*IF WE ARE "OUT OF OUR MIND," AS SOME SAY, IT IS FOR GOD; IF WE ARE IN OUR RIGHT MIND, IT IS FOR YOU.*  
*2 CORINTHIANS 5:13*

Paul clearly explains that if he is out of mind, living in such a way that the world does not understand, then he is living for Christ, but if he is living in such a way that pleases men he is in his right mind and not following Christ.

Paul and the apostles were fools, and they changed the world for Christ because of it. We need more followers of Christ who are fools, because our world is in desperate need of change again.

- Your generation is more connected than any generation in history yet at the same time is more isolated. And rates of depression, suicide, and addiction continually arise because of it.
- There is more wealth and resources in the world than ever before and yet more poverty and suffering at the same time.
- At the current rate, studies show that only 4% of your generation will follow Christ.

These are not good trends. But as followers of Christ we do not see things the way they are but instead the way they could and should be. And if we become fools for Christ I believe that the latter will become more than just a dream. They will become a reality.

In the next few lessons we will dig into this idea of being fools for Christ and see exactly what that means. And to begin with we start with what any life for Christ must begin with, meeting Jesus.

## READ ROMANS 6

### 1. IN CHRIST WE ARE FREE.

This is the number one key to living a life as a fool for Christ. When we come to Christ we are free. Take a moment to write down the verses that say we are free in this passage. We will go into detail in a moment about how we become free and what exactly we are free from, but for now I just want it to begin to sink in that once you come to Christ you are in fact free.

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## 2. THIS FREEDOM COMES ONLY THROUGH SALVATION IN CHRIST.

### WHAT DO PEOPLE USUALLY SAY OUR FREEDOM COMES FROM?

In my experience, living in the United States, people say that freedom comes from the Bill of Rights or having the right laws in place from the government. While these are not necessarily bad things they are not true for a follower of Christ. Our freedom comes from Jesus death on the cross and resurrection. What is so great about that is our freedom cannot be taken away.

This is hard for us to grasp, living where many of us live, but it is the truth. Just look at people from other countries that live for Christ and face persecution. You never see them asking for laws to be changed or for religious freedom of any kind. They always just pray that God's name be glorified and that they get the opportunity for another day to continue the work he has called them to. This is because they truly understand that their freedom comes from following Christ and being obedient to His will. Let's begin to look at how Paul explains this to us.

Let's do things differently. Let's start at the end and then work our way back from the top. In verse 23, Paul clearly explains the Gospel and how we get our freedom. He says that the wages of sin is death. What this means is that because you and I have sinned we deserve death. That is what we have technically earned because of what we had done in this life, whether our sins were big or small. But God did not want that for us. So He sent His only son Jesus to die in our place. Because of this we have the opportunity for a free gift that we could do nothing to earn, because regardless of how many good things we do we can never get to God or freedom. But Christ made the way, through His work on the cross for us to cross over into light, life, and freedom. That's it clear and simple. But in case it is not clear yet, let's go back to the top and make sure we fully understand.

Verse 1-7: When we come to Christ we die to our old ways of living. The old person is literally gone and can never come back. So we do not have to worry about being enslaved ever again, because we have a new life and are a new creation. I cannot stress this point enough. Do not buy into the life from Satan or anyone else that you are that old person. When temptation and trials come remember that you are a new creation in Christ and you do not have to go back to your old ways of living. Baptism paints a perfect picture of this. We are lowered and our old life dies with Christ and is buried, and then we are raised to walk in newness of life.

Verses 7-14: We get life. This life is not just in Heaven but begins now. We get to live in a new way. Not the ways of the world, living in sin, but instead we get a purpose, to live like Christ. We are also free from sin. It is strange to think about but this scripture says we literally have the power to be free from sin. Will we stumble from time to time? Yes, we will never be perfect on this earth. But we can and should strive for it because in Jesus we have been given the freedom and the power to live a life we never dreamed imaginable, a life without sin. And since sin does nothing but destroy our lives and the lives of those around us, we should desperately want that life that is free from it.

Verses 15-22: We should never abuse this freedom we have been given. Yes, God's grace is limitless. Yes we can never lose our salvation. Yes when we mess up God will forgive us and restore us once again. But this is not a license for us to just go live however we want to. Because Christ gave everything for us we give everything for Him. We owe Him our all and should gladly give it. So in essence we become slaves to Christ, which is really no slavery at all. It is actual the ultimate freedom.

#### BUT DO WE GET FREEDOM FROM?

##### A. FREE FROM SIN.

We can see clearly in this passage that we are freed from sin. It no longer has a grip on our lives. Will we be perfect? No. But we can never buy into a lie that says that we must settle for a life of mediocrity where we are trapped in sin like everyone else. We must believe that we are free and can live for more than what the world says is possible.

##### B. FREE FROM DEATH.

Remember that the gift of God is eternal life? Therefore we are free from death. Because once this life ends the next one begins. This is an incredible thing because it means nothing can stop us. Just look at Jesus. The Pharisees and Sadducees thought that if they could just kill Jesus they could kill His movement. But death couldn't stop Him and the grave could not hold Him. And it has been the same way for His followers ever since. Not even death can stop us from doing the work of God. Which brings us to our last freedom.

### C. FREE FROM FEAR.

Once we come to Christ we no longer have anything to fear. Because as scripture says, we have not been given a spirit of timidity or fear, but one of power, love, and discipline. Just take the two biggest fears in the world, public speaking and death. Jesus told His disciples that when the time came that they would be brought before the courts that they should not fear because the Holy Spirit would give them the words to say (Matthew 10:19). Notice something here. Jesus never said I will keep you from troubles and difficult times or that we would always be “safe.” But instead He said He would be with us so we have nothing to fear. Now take the second fear, death. As Christians we can say, “What can they do? Kill me? My life is not my own anyways and I have eternal life, so in a way they cannot kill me if they wanted to.”

It is crazy to think about it but it is the truth. And we get this freedom and emboldened spirit when we come to Christ. You can see this fact in the apostles. They were scared and hiding when Jesus died and then when He rose from the dead and they experienced life changed, they were never afraid again. Instead they faced the most difficult situations imaginable for the sake of making sure the Gospel was spread all over the world.

### 3. THIS FREEDOM IS NOT JUST FOR US.

All of this is great and means so much for us. This truth of the freedom we get and how we get it turns us loose to be fools for Christ and change the world around us. Which is maybe the most important thing that we need to remember. This freedom is not just for us. God so loved the world, not just our corner of it. We have to remember that Jesus did not just die for us but also for the world around us. There are others, who are like we were. They are waiting for hope and freedom and just do not know where to find it. We have a responsibility to go out to them and take this gift of eternal life and message of freedom to everyone we can.

Because any time that we someone struggling with sin or making choices that we do not understand there is a reason. It is because there is a whole in their life that they are trying to fill with everything they can find. But what they do not realize is that that the only thing that can fill that hole is a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. So when we see people making those decisions and seemingly throwing their lives away, it is not time to reject them or push them away. Instead it is time to go to them and tell them that we have what they are looking for.

SO AS WE CLOSE I HAVE TWO QUESTIONS FOR YOU.

1. DO YOU HAVE THIS FREEDOM?
2. WHO DO YOU NEED TO TAKE THIS GIFT OF FREEDOM TO?

A large, faint, stylized background image of a person holding a sign that says "FOOLS". The person is wearing a patterned garment and holding a long pole with a rectangular sign attached to it. The sign has the word "FOOLS" written on it in a bold, sans-serif font. The background is a light gray color with a subtle pattern of small dots.



SESSION ONE

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF AS A FOOL FOR CHRIST? WHY OR WHY NOT?
2. WHAT DO YOU THINK THINGS WOULD LOOK LIKE IF WE BECAME FOOLS FOR CHRIST?
3. WHAT KEEPS YOU FROM BEING FREE?
  - A. FROM SIN?
  - B. FROM DEATH?
  - C. FROM FEAR?
4. WHO DO YOU NEED TO GO TELL ABOUT THIS GIFT OF FREEDOM?
5. TAKE SOME TIME TO WALK BACK THROUGH ROMANS 6 TO ALLOW STUDENTS TO WRESTLE WITH ANY SCRIPTURE THEY DO NOT QUITE UNDERSTAND OR TO SHARE WHAT TRUTHS JUMP OUT AT THEM.

FOOLS

## LESSON 2: ON A MISSION MATTHEW 28:18 - 20

# fools

## SESSION TWO

In David Platt's book *Radical*, he tells the story of the SS United States, a luxury liner for presidents, heads of states, and a variety of other celebrities who traveled on her during her seventeen years of service. Here is the problem though. That was not what the ship was designed for. The ship was actually designed to be an 80 million dollar troop ship that could speedily carry 15,000 troops. And once the ship was built it was the fastest, most reliable troop carrier in the world. But it never fulfilled its purpose. Instead of being a ship ready for war it became a vessel of luxury, indulgence and comfort. Instead of having an urgent task to accomplish, the luxury liner could enjoy the trip and would never actually go out on the mission it had been created for.

David Platt goes on to draw the connection between the SS United States and us as Christians. Let me explain. Each of us has a mission. And if we are truly going to be fools for Christ we will live out that mission. And if we do not, we will be just like the SS United States. We will just be along for the ride and never actually fulfill our purpose in life.

Now, some of you may think that this does not sound so bad. You think, "A life of luxury and less work sounds good to me." But here is the problem. When we refuse to do our work it does not just affect us. The whole world suffers. We will get into exactly what our work boils down to in a moment, but to start with let's look at a few examples. Did you know that less than 50% of Christians ever share their faith? Which means that people do not get to hear about Jesus and the great thing He has done for them. And if they die without Jesus they spend eternity in Hell.

That is not good, and because of our neglect to go out on the mission we have been called to, studies show that less than 4% of your generation will follow Christ. Let that sink in for a moment.

Did you also know that we are called to go out and love our neighbor (Matthew 22:34-40)? And that even though there is more wealth and resources than ever there is also more poverty and suffering than ever. There are many reasons for this but much of it is because the church has been neglecting to go out on the mission we have been called to.

There is so much we could go into in order to explain this idea but for now I want to focus on what our primary mission is and what the goal of any work we do should be. And I believe that Jesus said it far better than I ever could have so let's look at His words now.

*<sup>18</sup> THEN JESUS CAME TO THEM AND SAID, "ALL AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME. <sup>19</sup> THEREFORE GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, <sup>20</sup> AND TEACHING THEM TO OBEY EVERYTHING I HAVE COMMANDED YOU. AND SURELY I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, TO THE VERY END OF THE AGE."  
MATTHEW 28:18 - 20*

This passage shows us Jesus final words on Earth. He has lived a perfect life, in the process showed us how to live, has died for our sins, and rose from the dead. And now He is telling His disciples in the present and the many to come in the future, including us, what our marching orders are. And in these few yet powerful words we learn so much about what we are to be doing as fools for Christ and how we are able to do all of it.

### 1. WHEN JESUS SPEAKS, WE MUST LISTEN.

Jesus said that, "All authority on Heaven and on Earth has been given to Me..." This means that He had the right and power to command what He was about to command. You see Jesus was the Son of God (John 6:37-40, John 14:6-9), not just a good man or a great teacher. So when we read Jesus' words they are not merely just nice suggestions for us to consider. Instead they are commands for us to follow. Therefore when Jesus tells us to love our neighbors, and even our enemies (Matthew 5:43-48) we must do that. And when Jesus says for us to go and make disciples we must do that as well. This command, or anything that Jesus commands, is not just a job for a few select followers of Christ, they are for all of us. This is important to remember because too many Christians believe that they can pick and choose what they want to follow and listen to when it comes to Jesus. And our world has suffered because of it. But

when you look at the apostles, who were fools for Christ as we are now striving to be, we see that they believed that Jesus was who He said He was, that He did what He said He would do, and that because of this they must follow all that He commanded.

## 2. WE ARE TO MAKE DISCIPLES

To continue our last thought, we must do what Jesus commands. Therefore we must make disciples. But what does that mean? Well I think there are two important things for us to look at.

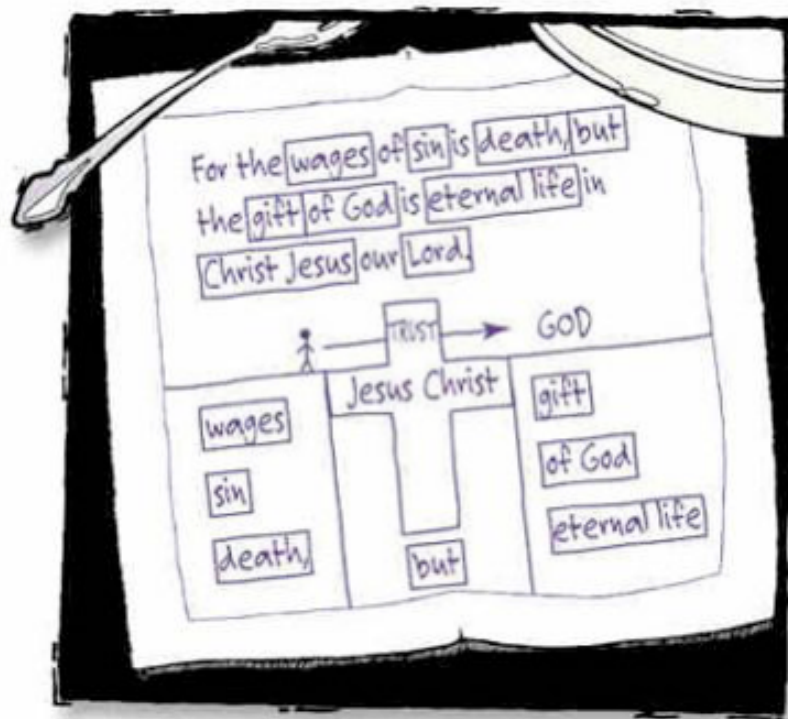
### A. MAKING DISCIPLES STARTS WITH SHARING THE GOSPEL.

Someone cannot just decide they want to start living for Jesus. Many people try to do this and here is why. They read the Bible and think that Jesus was a good teacher or a wise man and they want to take some of His teachings and apply it to their lives. But they do not want to take all of it. Because if they take all of it they know they must give up control, admit that Jesus is God, and make Him Lord of their lives. Jesus never allows for half-hearted followers though. His desire is for fully committed disciples. Therefore this is what we must do. In order for us to be a disciple we must give our lives to Jesus. This begins with believing the Gospel. If you have trusted in Christ to forgive you of your sins then you have done this and you have a relationship with God. And nothing can take that away. But I want to take a moment to walk through the Gospel so that you can be reminded of the great gift you have received, those who have not received the Gospel can have an opportunity to do so, and we can be prepared to go out and share the Gospel with others so they too can become disciples.

#### READ ROMANS 6:23

This verse perfectly sums up the Gospel. The Bible tells us that we all have sinned (Romans 3:23). And because of that sin we have earned death. This is because since God is perfect, holy, and just, He can have not part with sin and must bring a punishment for sin. This punishment is death and separation from God. And nothing we can do on our own get us out of that punishment or get us to God. This is one of the major differences between Christianity and the rest of the religions in the world. Other religions say you have to earn your way to God but we know that this is impossible. And here's another major difference. While other religion's gods are distant and impersonal, we serve a personal God who is full of infinite love.

And in that infinite love God desired to have a relationship with us and did not want us to suffer that punishment of separation and death. So He sent Jesus, His one and only Son, to die in our place (John 3:16). That is right. Even though Jesus came down to earth and humbled himself as a man. And even though He never sinned He took on the punishment of sin in our place. Therefore we can have the gift of eternal life. Now, make sure you understand that it is just that, a gift. We cannot do enough good things to earn eternal life because then we could take credit for it (Ephesians 2:8). But God is the one who deserves all the glory because He is the one that made a way for us, the one and only way (John 14:6). Just in case this is still not clear, here is an illustration to help.



Here is the important part. You need to decide if you have received this gift. If you have great! You should celebrate and know that nothing can take this gift away from you. But if you have not you need to realize that without this gift you will spend eternity in Hell separated from God, not to mention missing out on having a relationship with God now and being a part of His work in this world. I implore you to make this decision now. Confess to God that you are a sinner, admit that you need Him, and make Him Lord of your life. Then comes part two. Once you have made this decision you need to make sure that you share the Gospel with others. Because others around you are in the exact same boat you were if they do not have a relationship with Christ. They will receive death. They will spend eternity in Hell.

They will miss out on the hope, joy and purpose that is available through Jesus in this life. I do not want that for my friends and family. Do you? We must be bold and share our faith with the world around us. If we not we cannot call ourselves fools for Christ and we are missing out on the full blessings that God is wanting to offer us.

## B. MAKING DISCIPLES CONTINUES WITH DOING LIFE TOGETHER

The next part of this is just as important. We must realize that we do not just stop our work after sharing the Gospel with someone. Christianity is not a hit and run event. We must disciple those whom we share the Gospel with so they can learn how to follow Jesus as well. And to me, discipleship in a nutshell is doing life together.

I get this definition by looking at Jesus, the ultimate model for discipleship. He invested His life in His disciples. They ate together. They hung out together. They discussed and studied scripture together. They prayed together. And through all of this came teachable moments so that Jesus' disciples could grow in their relationship with Him so that they could turn around and help others experience the same life change they had.

We must follow the example of Jesus. We cannot just share the Gospel with someone and then leave them alone. We must invest our lives in them so they can become disciples. This means we hold them accountable, we study scripture together, we meet each others needs, and we encourage one another. And sometimes this happens in a scheduled time but for the most part it is just about including people in our lives and showing them how a follower of Jesus lives. This does take commitment but there is nothing better that we commit our lives to than discipling someone so that they can turn around and do the same thing for someone else.

## 3. THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL PEOPLE.

The next powerful thing that I see in Jesus' words is that He commands us to make disciples of all nations. This tells me two things. The first is that our work is not complete until all people have heard and received the Gospel. This is important to remember because often times as Christians we get comfortable or feel good about the fact that a few people God saved and think our work is done.

But while we should celebrate the fact that a few people's lives are changed for all eternity, we must remember that there are still many more to be reached.

The second part of this is that the Gospel is for all people. It does not matter if someone does not live near you, does not look like you, does not have as much as you, or even if you consider them an enemy. It does not even matter what someone has done to you or someone else. The Gospel, God's love story of grace and forgiveness, is available to all people. You cannot pick and choose who can get saved. Because if you say that one person is unable to receive God's grace and therefore think you should not reach out to them, you are saying the same thing about yourself because we all have sinned and all need God's forgiveness. And we can all receive it because Jesus died for us and rose from the dead.

#### 4. JESUS IS WITH US THE WHOLE TIME.

It's hard to say that something is the best part since there is so much good truth in this passage, but this may be the best part. In our journey of building disciples and being fools for Christ, Jesus is with us. We are never alone. Therefore we have nothing to fear and nothing is impossible (Matthew 19:26). We can take the Gospel to places no one else will go. We can reach our entire campus for Christ. We can see someone come to Christ who people thought was unreachable. Not because of our own power but because of the fact that Jesus is with us and working in us and through us. This is important to remember because discipleship is a long and often hard process. Satan does not want you to live our faith and He definitely does not want you to share it with others. But we have to remember that with Jesus, and with each other, we can do all things. We can be fools and in the process we can see our world changed.

# fools

## SESSION TWO

### SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF AS A TROOP SHIP READY FOR BATTLE OR A LUXURY LINER?
2. WHAT ARE SOME COMMANDS OF JESUS THAT YOU HAVE BEEN IGNORING?
3. HAVE YOU EVER SHARED THE GOSPEL WITH SOMEONE?
4. IF SO WHAT WAS IT LIKE? IF NOT, WHY NOT?
5. DO YOU BELIEVE THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL PEOPLE? DOES THAT TRUTH MEAN YOU NEED TO CHANGE ANYTHING IN YOUR LIFE?
6. HOW DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL THAT JESUS IS ALWAYS WITH US?
7. PRACTICE SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH ONE ANOTHER.

# fools

## SESSION THREE

In the early 1900's there was a group of Christian leaders working in the church in the Northeastern United States in cities like New York. In the process of this work they began to notice some alarming things around them. What they noticed was that their neighbors around them were in poverty and suffering. They also became aware of the fact that while they were busy focusing on sin and "saving souls", they had neglected to be out meeting this needs. As they studied scripture and looked at the life of Jesus they began to realize that this was not right. So they set out to do this work of meeting the needs of the world around them. In the process though they decided that any work other than meeting physical needs of their neighbors was not important so they merely focused on meeting needs and stopped spreading the saving message of the Gospel. This movement became known as the Social Gospel. As we have seen though in our last lesson, we are clearly to be devoting our lives to the Gospel.

Well, around the same time there was another group of leaders who knew this. They became very angry at the bad teaching that was going on in the Social Gospel movement.

The problem though was that they decided that in order to make sure that it was clear that they were different, they only shared the Gospel and believed that any work that involved meeting the physical needs of those around them was against scripture and not the job of the church. While I applaud them for wanting to share the Gospel and help people overcome their greatest need, sin and the death they deserve because of it, there was another problem that arose. They neglected to love the world around them in. This not only lead to poverty and suffering in many communities but also lead to a world wondering how a church could claim to serve such a loving God and yet not seem to care too much about those He created.

You see both sides did some good, but they were not fools for Christ. This is because they only lived out half of their calling. This is because, as we saw in our last lesson, we are to be completely devoted to sharing the Gospel and doing life with others in the process of discipleship. But, as we will see in this lesson, if we are truly fools for Christ we will have an open heart that sees and feels the need and pain in the world around us in such a way that we know we must be God's hands and feet to meet those needs.

We could look at a number of scriptures to illustrate this point but I believe that one does it better than other. This passage is a parable of Jesus as He tries to explain to His followers that they will give an account to God for what they did with the time on Earth they have been given.

READ MATTHEW 25:31 - 46

Real quick

THIS PASSAGE DOES NOT TEACH THAT WE MUST EARN OUR WAY INTO HEAVEN.

This passage does however clearly teach us that we have a work to be doing on this Earth. And if we have truly experienced life-change in Jesus we will not be able to help but do that work. See, in this passage Jesus is telling His listeners that one day they would stand before God, either when they die or when Jesus comes back, and they would give an account for what they had done with their lives. And that many of them who might say that they knew Him might never have actually known Him since they never actually showed the fruit of the life change a Christ follower experiences or put their faith into action as a true Christ follower does. Now let's dig in and see some specific things that this passage teaches us about having open hearts to the hurts and needs of the world around us.

#### 1. WE MUST SEE THE NEED AROUND US.

If you skip to the second half of this passage you see people asking the question, "When did we see...?" They were oblivious to the need around them, or they were at least oblivious to the fact that they needed to do something about it. And as is so often true in scripture, this is not just a problem that people a long time ago had. This is still true today. Many of us do not even realize that people are in need around us. There are many reasons why this is the case, some of which we will discuss in this lesson, but all that matters is that we realize that there is need around us. Any easy way to do this is to think about your own life. Has there ever been a time where you felt lonely?

Have you ever gone through a difficult situation like your parents getting divorced? Has there ever been a time where you thought you might have to go without food, clothing, or shelter? Many of us have in some form or fashion. And guess what, if we have, then so have those around us. We need to realize this. Everyone, even those who we might think have it all together, have needs. We need to ask God to give us a heart and eyes like His so we can see those needs so that we can be fools for Christ and meet them.

## 2. WHEN WE FAIL TO MEET NEEDS WE FAIL TO LOVE GOD.

This is not optional. Anyone who says that meeting needs is not the job of a Christ follower is a liar. Anyone who say that meeting needs is just the job of a few Christ followers or those who are in full time ministry is a liar. We all must meet the needs of those who come into our lives. And why? Because if we do not we fail to love God.

This may seem harsh or even crazy. But it is the truth. For one, in this passage Jesus says that if you fail to show love, even to the least of these, you fail to love Him. But there is another passage where Jesus says something very powerful and challenging. He says if you love Him you will keep His commandments (John 14:15). You see loving God is not something we can just say. It is a daily decision we must make. We must actively love God by being obedient to do what He has commanded. And a big part of those commands is showing love to those around us. In fact, Jesus put it right up there with loving Him. Not to mention that as we see, when we serve the poor we literally are serving Jesus.

## 3. WE MUST BE BROKEN NOT JUST GUILTY.

It could be real easy to go out and meet needs out of guilt, obligation, or just to check off some box. But this is not truly showing love to God or others. If we truly love others we will be broken for them. Because in brokenness we will to an extent feel their pain. In brokenness we will actually be moved to take action. In brokenness we will be able to actually put the work in that it takes to show someone love, because it will not always be easy. Sometimes they will not appreciate or even want your help. Often times they will not change over night and their problems will not magically be solved due to one good deed. But, if we truly get involved in the mess of the lives of those around us and do life with them they will see life change. But in order for this to happen heart must break for them so that we can have an attitude of serving them as well as making sure we are obedient to the next thing this passage teaches us.

#### 4. WE MUST LOVE THE WHOLE PERSON.

Remember our opening illustration. One side worried about physical and emotional needs and the other side worried about spiritual needs and neither one of them did their whole job. If we are going to be fools for Christ, we must love the whole person as we see as Jesus describes how His followers cared for Him.

##### A. PHYSICAL NEEDS

Imagine going to someone and sharing the Gospel with them and they have not eaten in a couple of days. You tell them how much God loves them yet do not offer them food or anything to drink. What sort of message does that send? Do you really think it says God loves you to say, “Let me share something with you that you need from this great God who loves you but I do not care that you are hungry.” These messages do not match up do they? No they don’t. We cannot claim to serve a loving God and not show love to the world around us. Because if we do not show love the world will not believe anything we have nor will they want to receive the hope of the Gospel that we bring them and they so desperately need. And besides, Jesus said that we the world would know we were His followers by the way we loved them and each other (John 13:35). There are many layers to this but a big part is making sure the physical needs of our neighbors in our communities and all over the world are met.

##### B. EMOTIONAL/RELATIONAL NEEDS

Jesus speaks of being a stranger and being invited in. He also speaks of being in prison. But you know what, even when He speaks of physical need there is an emotional and relational need there is well. Because with poverty often comes isolation and loneliness. People desperately desire community and relationships. They are what God designed for. In fact people often make many of the poor choices they do because they want love, acceptance and community. We have to make sure that we are going out and proving others the acceptance and community they need. They need to know that they belong and that the community they have been looking for can only be found in a relationship with Jesus and becoming part of His family.

##### C. SPIRITUAL NEEDS

When Jesus mentions prison I do think that speaks to loneliness. I also think that this speaks to literally visiting people in prison, especially if we

ever run into a situation where our brothers and sisters in Christ are in prison for their faith. But I believe there is another layer to this.

Many people are trapped in a prison of sin. Some are deep in this prison as they are trapped in patterns and addictions and they feel they have no hope and no way out. But all people who do not know Jesus are trapped in a prison of sin if they do not know Jesus. We must help them get out of that prison and the only way to do so is by sharing the Gospel. And as we meet their physical needs, offer them community and acceptance, and speak the truth in the Gospel into their lives, they will not help but be able to see Jesus in us and want what we have.

#### 5. WE MUST BE CLOSE TO NEEDS.

The last thing I want to share is one of the most important things in this passage to me and yet one of the most often overlooked. If we are going to meet needs we must be close to them. In this parable people were feeding Jesus, clothing Him, visiting Him in prison, and inviting them into their homes. We cannot possibly love others, meet their needs, and help them experience life change from a distance.

Does this mean we cannot pray for people overseas? No. Does it mean that we cannot donate money to help people all over the world that we will never even meet? Not at all. But it does mean that if we are going to be fools for Christ we must get out of our pews, or seats, and go out into our communities and love those around us.

You must get close to need in your school even if it means you choose not to sit with your friends and instead sit at a table with someone who no one else likes. You must get close to need in your neighborhood even if it means you sacrifice time you wanted to spend doing something for yourself in order to just sit and cry with someone while their parents go through a divorce. You need to get close to need in your community, even if it means going to a side of town you have been told to never go to. Whatever the need is, we must get close to it, be broken for it, and work tirelessly until the need is met and life change has occurred. Because isn't this the heart of discipleship anyways, doing life together?

I pray that you will begin to be blessed with burden for the needs around you. What does this mean? It means basically what we have been talking about. I hope that you will see need around you and it will weigh heavy on your heart in such a way that you cannot rest until the need is met and the lives of those around you are transformed.

Because when you live with that heart and that attitude you can truly begin to say you are a fool for Christ.

A decorative wreath made of leaves and berries, with a sign in the center.

FOOLS



## SESSION THREE

### SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. WHICH SIDE OF OUR CALLING ARE YOU BETTER AT?  
DO YOU DO EITHER?
2. WHAT ARE SOME NEEDS YOU SEE AROUND YOU?
3. ARE YOU MEETING NEEDS?
4. WHAT DOES IT MEANT TO YOU TO LOVE THE WHOLE  
PERSON?
5. ARE THERE NEEDS YOU AS A GROUP HAVE BEEN FAR  
FROM AND NEED TO GET CLOSE TO?
6. BRAINSTORM HOW YOU AS A GROUP CAN BEGIN  
MEETING THE NEEDS OF THOSE AROUND YOU.

# tools

LESSON 4: LOVING  
COMMUNITY  
ACTS 2:42 - 47

## SESSION FOUR

The human body is an amazing thing. I mean the fact that we take a breath without thinking, our heart beats without us ever even noticing, our body maintains a temperature of 98.6 degrees... It's incredible and leaves no doubt in my mind that we are created by an intelligent and loving creator who knit us together in our mother's womb (Psalms 139:13) and knows the very number of the hairs on our heads (Luke 12:7). But I learned something else recently that made me believe this even more.

Of all the amazing things about our bodies, the brain may be the most amazing. And there are specific things that happen in our development process that either lead our brains to be healthy and fully formed or lacking. One of the things are the relationships in our lives. If we do not get healthy attention and connection with other human beings from an early age, parts of our brains are not formed correctly. It is amazing how science proves that we are designed to live connected with one another in community. But this is not just about science. It is about the fact that God has designed us to have loving, supportive relationships with one another. God and us is not enough. Let that sink in for a moment cause it took me for a loop the first time I heard it, God and us is not enough. Don't believe me? I will show you in scripture.

**READ GENESIS 2:18.**

This is the first time in the creation account that God says something is not good. And what He says is not good is that man is alone. Here is what else is interesting; sin has not yet entered the world. Man has perfect fellowship with God, there is no sin to that comes between man and God, and yet God

says that man needs someone else. To me this just proves what we have been talking about, that God and us is not enough. We need relationships with others. You can see this in the New Testament as well. When Jesus sends His disciples out for the first time to do ministry He does it in pairs (Luke 10:1-23). When disciples go out into the city to preach in Acts they were together and many time when they were brought before the courts it was in pairs. If you look at Paul, he always has someone with Him: Barnabas, Mark, Luke, Timothy. We cannot be fools for Christ alone. We will need to be in community with one another in order to press on in this journey of following Christ. But what does this community look like? I want to take a few moments to dive into scripture and look at the first Christian community that formed in order to get a good idea about what Christian community should look like in our lives.

READ ACTS 2: 42 - 47

### 1. THE IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO COMING TO CHRIST IS BECOMING PART OF A COMMUNITY.

As followers of Christ we are His body, the church (1 Corinthians 12:27). This means that when we accept Jesus we become part of His family and our brothers and sisters are Christians all over the world. So our immediate response in coming to Jesus is to be near our family. This is what happens in this passage. The apostles go out and preach the Gospel, thousands of people get saved and baptized, and they immediately form a community. No one had to tell them to or beg them to. They just did because it felt right. But more importantly they did it because that is what Jesus had modeled for Him as He did life with His disciples and others who He came in contact with. If you are a follower of Christ you must have relationships with other Christians and be a part of a community who regularly meets together. You were designed for this and you will not survive without it.

### 2. CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IS DIVERSE.

If you look at your local church you may not say it is diverse. If it is not it does not surprise me because as Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The most segregated hour in America is the church pew on Sunday morning. " This is sad though because the Body of Christ is very diverse. Remember, I said that your brothers and sisters are Christians all over the world. And while this passage does not specifically say this, I can tell you that it is implied. Because the great thing about Jesus is that when people come to Him walls and barriers are broken down. If you study further in the New Testament and study history, you will see that the body of Christ, the church, was very unique. It was the first time that rich and poor, male and female, Jew and

Greek, all truly came together. It is a beautiful picture about how we are all God's children and it is sin that has divided. But Jesus work in His death and Resurrection have overcome sin so therefore we can be one in Christ Jesus. You need to realize that all who come to Jesus are welcome in your community and you need to welcome all so they can eventually come to know Jesus. Because Jesus died for all people (1 Peter 3:18), not just those who look like you, talk like you, or whom you like to spend time with.

### 3. CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY STUDIES GOD'S WORD.

Daily the early church would devote themselves to the Apostle's teaching because they knew that they needed to understand how they should live in their new found faith. But I believe that more than that, they thirsted for more knowledge of God because they had finally realized that all they had been searching for and hoping for they found in Jesus. And they wanted as much of Jesus as they could get. We need to be the same way. We need to realize that we need God's word in order to know how we should live our lives (2 Timothy 3:16). But more importantly, all we hope and long for is in Jesus, and we need to never take for granted the fact that we can dig into the word of God and learn more about Him everyday. Therefore, we must devote time to that on our own, but also as a community with other believers.

### 4. CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY HOLDS EACH OTHER ACCOUNTABLE.

When you devote yourself to teaching you do more than just listen to something or read it. You truly wrestle with it and then make sure that you and others live by it. This is the essence of accountability. We learn how we should live then we get help from others to make sure that we are living this way. This is a huge part of Christian community. You need to have people whom you can share your struggles and sins with and then ask for accountability to make sure you do not struggle in those areas anymore (James 5:16). Then you need to turn around and do the same for them. We also need to continue to wrestle with what scripture teaches so that we can work towards being more like Jesus. We need to stop pretending that all of us are perfect, and instead need to confess our sins to one another, see what the word of God says about those sins, and then work towards living lives that line up with scripture and the example that Jesus set for us. Because we represent Jesus in the world, and in fact we will be the only glimpse of Jesus that many people ever see. What would they say about Jesus from looking at your life? I hope that they would get the true picture of whom He is. At least that is what I want to strive for because I know I bear His name and represent Him to the world. And I want to be a light that draws people to Him, not a repellant that turns people away. But in order for me to live that

way I need others encouraging me and holding me accountable to live as I should.

#### 5. CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIPS TOGETHER.

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. And all work and no play is not Christian community. We need to fellowship with one another and enjoy each other's company. We need to share meals, take trips, and play games together. Because in these times we deepen our relationships with each other and we are reminded of the blessings that we receive in this life. And as we will see later, this joy and fellowship will be contagious and the world around us will want what we have.

#### 6. CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY PRAYS TOGETHER.

There is power in prayer (James 14:13-14). And while this is true when we pray on our own, it is even truer when we pray together in community. You can see this all throughout history but all you really need to do is look a couple of pages prior to the passage we already looked at today. If you look in Acts 1 you see that after Jesus died and rose from the dead He commissioned His disciples to go out and make disciples. But He told them to do something else. He told them to wait and pray until the Holy Spirit came. So the disciples did just that. They prayed earnestly together until the Holy Spirit came down upon them. Then they went out and were obedient to what God had called them to do. Then if you keep reading you will see that thousands of people were saved. And since they usually didn't count women and children the number is probably much higher than even scripture said. Guess what? We have met the same Jesus, we have the same Holy Spirit, and if we will be obedient to pray earnestly and do what Jesus has called us to we can see the same move of God. If you want to see God move in our family, in your church, in your community, on your campus, in your own life, then come together, share your burdens, and pray. Pray like you never have before. Cry out and keep crying out with your brothers and sisters in Christ until God moves. And if you do, I believe you will see God move as you never have before as many followers of Christ have throughout history and still do today.

## 7. CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY MEETS THE NEEDS OF ONE ANOTHER.

I will not spend too much time on this because we talked about meeting needs in our last lesson. But I do want to remind you that we are to meet the needs of one another and sacrifice what ever we have to in order to meet those needs. And when we do God can do big things. Because if you go over to Acts 4:34 you will see that when the body of Christ was obedient to put others above themselves and meet needs, there were no needy among them. That is right. They wiped out poverty in their community. Why couldn't you do the same thing?

## 8. CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY WORSHIPS TOGETHER.

Worship is about far more than just music (Romans 12:2) but we do need to have times where we sing praises to God (Ephesians 5:19). Yes we do this in our own private time with God but there is something powerful when we do this together as the body of Christ. This can happen in a scheduled worship service but some of my favorite times of worship are getting together with friends around a piano or a guitar and just singing out to God. Even if you do not think you can sing it does not matter. God does not care about how you sound but instead He cares about your heart. So cry out to God and sing praises to Him and allow Him to pour His love and grace out upon you.

## 9. CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IS NECESSARY.

Christian community is not just an obligation, but something that we desperately need. You see there was a reason the early church gathered together daily. They had to. They were daily being ostracized, arrested, and sometimes beaten for their faith. So they needed one another for accountability, healing, and encouragement so that they could carry on in their faith and continue their work that God had called them to. While you may not be beaten or arrested for your faith, although you could be, you will face tough times ahead and persecution. Jesus promised this because they first persecuted Him (John 15:18). People will not understand why we live the way we do and Satan will attack us because He does not want us to reach others for Christ. Therefore we will need one another so we can carry on and face trials and temptation when they come as Christ would want us to. Because through those times God will mold us into what He wants us to be (James 1:2-4), and with each other we will come through those trials, as He knew we would.

## 10. CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY MULTIPLIES.

It is interesting to me that in these passages about the church being the church and living in Community that there is always talk of people continually coming to Christ and lives being changed. In fact people come to Christ by the thousands. There are two reasons for this. One is that when we are in community as we should be we are spurred on to work even harder (Hebrews 10:24). Both because we have the encouragement that we need and because we are challenged to keep up with the work that others are doing. The other reason for these massive movements spurred on because of Christian community is that this community is contagious. We all have a deep desire to belong and be loved. And we do all sorts of things and go to all sorts of places trying to find that sense of belonging. But the only place that it can truly be found is in Christ and becoming a part of His family. We have discovered this truth and when we live in community as we should we help others discover this truth as well. This is because they will desire and thirst for what we have. They will want to know why we can live with such hope, joy and purpose and we will tell them it is because we met Jesus and He adopted us into His family. And we will be able to tell them that they too can have what we have and what they have been searching for if they will give their lives to Jesus and receive the gift He is offering them.

You need to ask yourself if you are living in Christian community. Are you a member of a local body of Christ, a church as we would call it? If not you are not living as a fool for Christ and are missing out on the full life that He is offering you in Him. Are you also involved in a small group where you can regularly study the Bible and share your struggles and questions with other fools for Christ? This is not about adding another obligation to your daily check list but instead is about you experiencing life in its fullest as God wants you to and accomplishing things that you never thought were possible in the world around you.



## SESSION FOUR

### SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. DISCUSS WAYS WHERE YOU SEE PEOPLE MAKE CHOICES OUT OF A DESIRE FOR COMMUNITY.
2. GO THROUGH EACH ASPECT OF COMMUNITY AND DISCUSS ITS IMPORTANCE AND HOW YOU ARE DOING IN THAT AREA AS A GROUP.

A large, faint background graphic of a hand holding a sign that says "FOOLS". The hand is rendered in a light gray, stippled style. The sign is a white rectangle with a gray border, and the word "FOOLS" is written on it in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The hand is positioned as if holding the sign from behind, with the fingers visible at the top and bottom.

FOOLS

# fools

LESSON 5: SELFLESS  
PHILIPPIANS 2:1 - 11

## SESSION FIVE

If you have been following closely you may have noticed a theme in our study.

We find our freedom in Christ and not ourselves.

We are called to reach others for Christ.

We are called to meet the needs of others.

We live in community with others.

See the pattern? Being a fool for Christ is not about us. It is about living a life that honors God and serves others. This is not normal compared to the way the world thinks and lives. The world says to take care of yourself. The world says to do whatever feels good to you. The world says to believe in whatever works for you. The world says that we are supposed to tear others down before they can tear us down. But we are not to live like the world (Romans 12:1-2). We are not to be normal. In fact we are to be as far from normal as possible. We are to be like Jesus.

In fact that is the best way that I can sum up being a fool for Christ is that you should live like Christ. Did you know that this is actually how we got our name, Christians? We did not give it to ourselves but the early followers of Christ earned the name, a derogatory term at the time. Why? Well the followers of Jesus were so peculiar and so much like Jesus that the world around them could think of nothing else but to call them Christians, the Christ ones.

We need to follow in their footsteps. And when you do all parts of your life that are devoted to worrying about your own needs and goals will be gone and you will be completely focused on a life that loves God and loves people. And when we do this you will get peace, joy, hope, and purpose like you never dreamed was possible. Now, you may be wondering, “How is a life like this possible? What does this life look like?” Well luckily, as Paul is going to tell us, Jesus already lived this life and set an example for how we too should live. Because Jesus came both to die for us and to show us how we should live.

READ PHILIPPIANS 2:1 - 11.

### 1. PUT OTHERS FIRST. IN ALL THINGS.

Have you ever flown on a plane? Did you actually listen to the safety speech? To be honest, I often tune out and am trying to enjoy a couple of more moments on my electronic devices before take off. But there is one part that always catches my attention. They always talk about how if there is a crash that oxygen masks will drop down. The crazy part to me though is that they always say that you should make sure that your mask is secure before you secure anyone else's. Okay this makes sense. You probably do want to take care of yourself first. Plus, what good are you to anyone else if you pass out due to lack of oxygen? But the Christian life is a little different.

In a way the world is a crashing plane in the sense that ever since sin entered the world things were on a steady decline. And all the pain, struggle, and brokenness we have are due to sin and its effects. But something happened in the process of this tailspin. Jesus came and died for the world so that not only we could be freed from sin but also from the effects of sin. And He has commissioned those who would follow after Him to go out and help others be freed from sin as well as helping them heal from the effects of sin in their lives.

So while we are on this crashing plane, and if we were honest we would say our world looks and feels that way sometimes, everyone around us is panicking. But we are not in a panic because we do not see things the way they are, we see things the way they could and should be. We see what God wants to do in the world through us. And the best part is we know that we have the key turn things back around. Plus, the best part is that since we already have met Jesus our eternity is secure and we have our oxygen masks on. So we have no need to worry about ourselves anymore but instead can fully focus on others.

We can help them get what they need to save their lives as well. And in the process we might even be able to turn the plane back up.

People all around us are walking around without hope and just grasping for some form of life and hope, as they know in their hearts that it could and should be. And we should be devoted fully, without any selfishness or fear, to helping them find that life and hope in Jesus. Therefore, whether it is our time, talents, treasure, influence, or anything else we have, we need to not see it as something that can be used for ourselves but instead something that can be used to reach others for Christ. Because our time on this Earth is short (John 4:14) so we cannot afford to waste it on ourselves.

## 2. HUMBLE YOURSELF BECAUSE CHRIST HUMBLED HIMSELF MORE.

The world's philosophy on life is that it is all about us. The world says that you should get as much fame and power as you possibly can. But this is not God's way. God's way says that life is about Him and serving others (Matthew 22:34-40). In order to live this way you will have to humble yourself.

You will have to humble yourself to love those who others do not love or will not associate with. You will have to humble yourself to love your enemies. You will have to humble yourself and sacrifice the opportunity to make certain purchases or go to certain events so that you instead can use your funds to help others. You will have to humble yourselves to forgive others when they hurt you or persecute you. You will have to humble yourself and serve others instead of putting yourself before them. But all of this humbling is necessary if we are going to be fools for Christ. And as Paul writes, we have already had an example because Christ humbled Himself far more than we could ever imagine.

Do you really grasp the truth that Paul is sharing in this passage? Jesus was God. But instead of remaining in Heaven being God He became a man. I cannot even begin to describe to you how big of a drop it is from God to man, but this is the drop that Jesus took for you and I. Then while on Earth He dropped even farther. He was not a king but instead plied a trade as a carpenter. He lived on the "wrong side" of town (John 1:46). He hung out with people that the religious leaders and those with power would not give the time of day (Mark 2:13-17). He took on the lowest jobs of all in order to model love service to His followers (John 13:1-17). And He was betrayed, beaten, abandoned, mocked, and died the worst death imaginable for lowly sinners like you and I. What is even crazier is that they did not take His life and He did not have to give it (John 10:17-18).

But He did it willingly because He loved us that much. Even more He died a death He did not deserve because He did not sin. There was never a greater example of humility than Jesus. He set the bar high, perfection, and that is the example we are to follow (Matthew 5:48).

There is some encouragement in this though. Because Jesus humbled Himself in this way, we can too. Because Jesus is there with us always and He understands what we are going through because He has been there to (Hebrews 4:15). And we can do all things through Christ when we allow Him to work in us and through us.

### 3. SACRIFICE EVERYTHING FOR GOD AND OTHERS BECAUSE JESUS DID THE SAME FOR YOU.

I probably could've saved some of the last point for here, but this truth is so good that it couldn't wait and it bears repeating. Jesus gave up everything for you so you should do the same for Him. Jesus said that no greater love has anyone than to lay down His life for His friends (John 15:13). But He did not just say it, He did it. Then He called us to do the same, to take up our cross and follow Him (Matthew 16:24).

Daily we need to lay down our hopes, desires, dreams, and goals for the sake of following Christ because He gave everything for us. And we must put others before ourselves so they can understand this same message we have been studying. That God loved them so much that He gave up everything for them so that they could have a life they never dreamed possible.

### 4. KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE ONLY GOAL WORTH WORKING TOWARDS.

It is in our nature to think about ourselves. But we are not the same person we used to be when we came to Christ so that is not how we should or have to live anymore. But from time to time we will want to buy into the lie that we are who we used to be and will want to begin thinking about ourselves again. But in those times, be because things are hard or we are just tired, we must persevere. And one the best ways to do that is to realize that there is nothing else in this life worth living for besides Jesus.

In this passage Paul talks about every knee bowing before Jesus and every tongue proclaiming Jesus as Lord. I cannot imagine anything better than seeing everyone in my family, church, community, and on a school campus coming to Christ.

That may seem like an impossible goal but all things are possible with God (Matthew 19:26). And when we work towards that goal, there is an even greater prize that awaits us. We can stand before God and hear, “Well done my good and faithful servant.” (Matthew 25:23) I can think of nothing greater; not a single award, trophy, date, scholarship, or anything else could compare to hearing those words at the end of my life.

We will have trials and struggles along the way, but it is okay because Christ is with us. Please know, these changes will not happen overnight. And as long as you are on earth it means God is not done with you yet and there is still work to be done.

So do not waste another second. There is much work to be done and we need more fools out there doing the work (Matthew 9:37). Don't settle for normal. Settle for nothing less than being a fool for Christ. And watch what happens to the world around you because of that commitment.

A large, faint, stylized background image of a person holding a sign that says "FOOLS". The person is depicted in a simple, almost abstract manner, with a long, thin pole supporting a rectangular sign. The sign has the word "FOOLS" written on it in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The background image is light gray and has a textured, stippled appearance. The overall composition is centered, with the sign and the word "FOOLS" being the most prominent elements.

FOOLS



# fools

SESSION FIVE SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. LEAD YOUR GROUP IN DISCUSSION AND PRAYER AS YOU FEEL THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADING YOU.

SESSION FIVE



# FOOLS