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# PARTNERSHIPS

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## Bible Study Series

5 Bible Studies

Great for You, Your Mission Group & Your Church!

*(These Bible Studies are for Individuals and/or Group Study)*

# “Partnerships: Jesus Sets Example”

## Bible Study One Summary:

### Summary:

Jesus came to earth as an amazing example of “partnership”. The incarnate Christ sought to abide in us so and us in Him so that much fruit could be borne, as shared in the Gospel of John 15:4-5.

### Method:

This message begins with the familiar passage in John 15:4-5. After introducing the incarnation of Christ, the message moves into examples of “partnerships” displayed in the life of Jesus.

*The first major concept* is how Jesus was/is God incarnate. The incarnation of Christ was willing decision to lay aside heaven and choose to live life alongside His creation.

*The second major concept* is how Jesus framed His entire ministry in the context of the “story of God”. When He talked about heavenly things, it was always in context of a bigger picture.

*The third major concept* is that Jesus did extraordinary things in our ordinary world to build bridges (partnerships) for the delivery of the gospel to the lost. This is the basis for the larger concepts of “partnerships.” As we live everyday life God can move in the common and ordinary and do extraordinary things in the lives of people.

# “Partnerships: Jesus Sets Example”

## BIBLE STUDY ONE

### Introduction

Have you ever wondered why God reaches out to us (me/you) in so many incredible ways? There are so many great stories in the Old Testament. Then, comes the New Testament filled with stories and parables and letters and even revelation.

### Jesus Chose Life With Us

Jesus made the choice to come live life with us. Philippians 2:7 states, *“He made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”* The verse is clear, *“He made Himself nothing.”* This was an intentional decision to come live here and experience life in the same way we live life.

John 1:14 declares, “ And the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.” Jesus made the choice to take on human flesh and all that would come with it. Even more, He did not make a quick visit here to check up on us. Our verse says, He “made His dwelling among us.” He lived here. Jesus took the step to “choose live life with us.”

### Jesus Lives Life With us

**He was born here.** (Luke 2:7) Jesus entered the world just as we do. He came, born of a woman in the very real town of Bethlehem.

**He grew up here.** (Luke 2:40) In Luke 2, there are two references to Jesus growing and maturing. Jesus went through the normal process of development, growth, and education.

**He got hungry.** (Matt 21:18) Jesus experienced life just as we live it. After a long day, Jesus found Himself hungry, in need of food.

**He was thirsty.** (John 19:28) On the cross, Jesus suffered a painful death. He lost a substantial amount of blood on the cross and as a result, He was thirsty.

**He got sleepy** (Luke 8:23). After a day of ministry, Jesus boarded a fishing boat with his disciples. He was tired, so He went to sleep in the boat. How tired was He? He slept so soundly that even a storm did not wake Him up. His disciples had to rouse Him to draw attention to the danger on the stormy sea.

**He experienced the emotion of anger** (Mark 3:5). Jesus felt anger just as we feel anger. Not all anger is rash and unjustified. In this example, Jesus was angry because of the stubborn hearts of the religious people around Him. They refused to listen and respond to His message. Jesus understood that deep feeling of frustration which we all have felt along the way.

**He experienced the emotion of sadness** (John 11:35). John tells us about the death of Lazarus, one of the dear friends of Jesus. Jesus was truly saddened by the loss and the result as noted in John 11, when read, “Jesus wept.” Jesus was touched by the death of someone near to Him. He also saw firsthand the effect death has on us as He looked into the eyes of the grieving loved ones of Lazarus.

### **Jesus Framed His Entire Ministry in the Context of Life Here**

Jesus took heavenly concepts and put them in terms we could understand. He started with familiar images from life here on earth. He used things common to people:

A shepherd and his sheep became an illustration of the love the Father has for us.

A bridegroom and his bride became an illustration about anticipation and preparation.

A farmer, his seeds and soils became an illustration of how God’s Word is received.

The parables demonstrate the common connection Jesus shared with us as he lived life on life.

Thus far, we have seen how Jesus lived in our world and in so many ways was just like us. But this is not the end of the story. This was not a grand heavenly experiment so God could learn how life is on earth.

### **In a World of Ordinary, Jesus Did the Extraordinary**

Jesus ministry was amazing, in part, because He did unexpected things right here in our world in order to bridge the gospel to His creation.

Something simple like a little boy’s lunch became a lesson on faith and a way to feed more than 5,000 people through partnership. He partnered with a lad. (John 6:13)

With His very words, Jesus calmed a storm on the raging sea. The fishermen among the disciples of Jesus had experienced many storms. Storms were common but what Jesus did was extraordinary. He partnered with nature. (Luke 8:24)

His death was not the end but it became the beginning point for eternal life and the promise of heaven. Death is common but Jesus promised something more beyond death. He said in John 11:25, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.” He partnered with eternity.

### **Conclusion**

Jesus took the steps to give examples of partnerships by choosing to live life with us. He was born here, lived here, died here, defeated death here and one day will return here! His life was also a demonstration of how we can partner with Him and others to make a difference for Christ. As we see the life and ministry of Jesus we see the importance and opportunity of partnerships. In the ordinary of life, God can do something extraordinary.

# Jesus' Partnerships: "Redefining Moments"

## Bible Study Two Summary

### Summary:

Jesus took ordinary moments and made them life changing. Two key moments in the ministry of Jesus could have been written off as meaningless but redefined the moments and lives were changed as a result.

### Method:

This message examines two common situations Jesus encountered in His ministry. One is in Jericho which led to the meeting between Zacchaeus and Jesus. The second happened in Samaritan territory by a well which led to the famous encounter between Jesus and the woman who came to the well for water.

*The first major movement in the message* shows how Jesus went through ordinary moments. In one story He is traveling and in the second story He is tired and thirsty from traveling.

*The second major movement in the message* shows how Jesus redefined each moment meaning he took ordinary moments and made them more.

*The third major movement in the message* demonstrates why it is essential for Christians to redefine moments in life. What life may define as ordinary is actually a Divine moment.

### Illustration:

The ongoing illustration for this message was the common occurrence of traveling and stopping at a gas station-convenience store for gas and a drink. This is similar to Jesus traveling and stopping for water at the well or passing through Jericho. If we let the world define that moment it would be nothing more than a gas stop. If we let God redefine the moment, something huge could happen in such a common place.

# Jesus' Partnerships: "Redefining Moments"

## BIBLE STUDY TWO

### Introduction

It is easy to let life take its course. It is easy to let life define our moments for us. Life will often define a moment and its value for us. Take a wedding for example. A wedding is defined as an important and valuable moment in life. What about pumping gas in the morning on the way to work? Life defines that moment for the most part as insignificant. If we live life this way, we might disregard the ordinary moments in life while rushing toward the next "big" moment. Life on life is about living differently. What if the ordinary moments are moments when God can use us? Even ordinary moments in life can become extraordinary moments. This is how Jesus lived life on life with us. He took ordinary moments and turned them into something more. Let's examine two ordinary events that became extraordinary.

### Ordinary Moment 1: The Story of Zacchaeus

In Luke 19 we are introduced to a Bible character named Zacchaeus. The biggest detail of this story is that Zacchaeus was a little man. How does this story unfold? It actually starts with something very ordinary in Luke 19:1. The Bible says, "Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through." This verse reveals that Jesus was doing something very ordinary as the story begins. What was he doing? He was traveling.

Jericho was not Jesus' destination. He was on his way to Jerusalem to die on the cross for us. Jericho was just another town on the way to Jerusalem. Jesus was traveling. He was just passing through. The big story of Zacchaeus started out under the most ordinary of circumstances.

### Ordinary Moment 2: The Story of the Woman at the Well

In John 4 we find another famous story that had a very ordinary beginning. Jesus was in Samaritan territory when He came up to a well. The Bible in John 4:6, "Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as He was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was the sixth hour." Don't race past his verse. Here we see Jesus living life on life.

This single verse tells us a great deal about Jesus at that moment. Jesus was once again traveling from place to place. He was tired, so tired in fact that the Bible says, "as tired as he was." Isn't that interesting? Jesus was worn out from his travels!

Jesus went and sat down by a well. Why was He at the well? Did He have an appointment? No, He was hot, tired and thirsty after a long day. Verse 6 says it was the "sixth hour." It was the middle of the day and Jesus was thirsty and needed a drink of water.

How would life define these moments? Jesus could have been thinking, "I've got to get to Jerusalem," and ignored the people of Jericho. After all, what could be more important than getting to Jerusalem? If life defined Jesus' time among the Samaritans, He could have said to Himself, "I've got to get some water and then I've got to get out of Samaritan territory."

We must be careful. We can easily blow right through the ordinary moments of life. Is there any value in pumping gas or going into the convenience store to get a bottle of water? If we let life define our moments then there is no real value to these moments. But what does God have planned for us in those moments? Moments must be redefined.

## **Redefining Moments**

Let's go back to Jericho and examine how Jesus redefined the moment he shared with Zacchaeus. In Luke 19:5 we see a major turning point in the story. Jesus comes to the base of a tree and up in the branches this little tax collector. The Bible says in verse 5, "When Jesus reached the spot, He looked up and said to [Zacchaeus], "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." The Bible verse says that Jesus came to the "spot." What spot is that? Physically speaking, it was at the very base of the tree where Zacchaeus was watching Jesus. Spiritually, it was the spot where Jesus redefined a moment. Jesus could no longer pass through Jericho. There was value in this moment. There was a purpose for Jesus being in that spot at that very moment. Jesus had to stop and engage this little man in conversation.

Now head over to the Samaritan village where Jesus was sitting beside a well. While Jesus waited a woman came up to the well to draw water. In John 4:7 Jesus uses the ordinary life moment of being thirsty and turns it into something more. The Bible says, "When a Samaritan

woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" Thirst and water became common points of connection.

The next time you reach into the cooler at a convenience store look to your left and right. You have something in common with that person standing next to you. Both of you are thirsty. Both of you are getting a drink. This is life on life! As crazy as it might sound, your ordinary moment in the store is just like the moment Jesus had with the woman at the well.

Jesus spoke to Zacchaeus and he asked a woman for a drink of water. Jesus was redefining moments. Life defines most moments as common and ordinary. If a moment is not redefined it will be missed!

## **Why Moments Must Be Redefined**

Moments must be redefined because there is always more to someone's life than meets the eye. Earlier we skipped a few verses in the story of Zacchaeus. If you read verses 2-4 you will pick up on some backstory. These verses reveal that Zacchaeus was the boss tax collector in his area. As you might imagine, he was probably not very popular in the town. Still, he had done well for himself, so much so that the Bible defines him as a wealthy man. Something must have been missing in his life. He was trying to get a glimpse of Jesus, a poor preacher from Nazareth. He was so determined that he climbed a tree so he could get a clear look at Jesus. Zacchaeus had a story. There was more to his life than one could see.

What about the woman at the well? She also had a backstory. Her story comes out in John 4:16-18. Jesus revealed that the woman had five previous husbands and was now living with a man. What does that reveal about her life? There was so much more to her life than a need for water from a well. She needed a transformation.

In both stories ordinary moments became so much more. Jesus' travels put him in the path of two people, both with great needs in life. Common events became moments for God to do something extraordinary. For Zacchaeus, it became a turning point in his life. By the end of the story he demonstrated true repentance. For the woman at the well it led to a change for her and for her entire village.

So much of life is lived like parallel lines which never cross. Life on life is about lines that cross. It is about lives that intersect. Who in your path needs Jesus? Will your moments be redefined or will those moments be missed?

# Jesus' Partnerships: "How It's Done"

## Bible Study Three Summary

### Summary:

Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan to demonstrate love in action. If we follow the steps of the Samaritan we can better understand how to redefine a moment and witness the work of God.

### Method:

This message begins with the backstory leading up to the Good Samaritan parable. The emphasis of the backstory is that the religious leader wanted to justify himself. I assert that he wanted to justify both his actions as being excellent and his inaction being acceptable. We want to justify what we do and what we don't do. We have our own reasons for both. The message shows how to do "partnerships" according to the events in the parable.

*We need eyes to see* shows how each person in the story saw the injured man. Only the Samaritan saw the man and had pity. We see lots of people and needs but do we allow our hearts to get involved?

*We must be willing to be interrupted* shows how the Samaritan allowed his journey to be interrupted so he could help the man. We are all busy, but will we allow God to interrupt our lives so He can use us?

*We must be willing to get involved* shows how the Samaritan went over to the man and got involved in his messy situation. Culturally we don't like to get involved with people. Christians must get involved to make a difference.

*We must be willing to make a commitment* shows how the Samaritan made a long-term commitment to help the injured man. Sometimes God gives us an opportunity that lasts only a moment, yet at other times He gives us something that will require the commitment of our time, energy and resources.

# Jesus' Partnerships: "How It's Done"

## BIBLE STUDY THREE

### Introduction

How does an ordinary moment become something more? Jesus told a powerful parable about a Samaritan man who simply helped an injured man along the road. In this story we see what it takes to redefine a moment and how to make a difference.

### Backstory

In Luke 10:25-29 a religious leader tried to put Jesus to the test. He asked Jesus what was necessary to gain eternal life. Jesus asked the man to give his reading of the law. The religious leader was quick to answer with familiar verses about loving God completely and loving others unselfishly. Jesus affirmed that loving others and loving God was the way of life. The religious leader wanted to go a step further. Verse 29 says, "But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

We know what the Bible teaches. We are to love, help and serve others. It is easy to be just like this man and try to justify our actions or even our lack of action. We want God to be pleased with what we do and understand why we don't do other things.

Jesus used a parable to illustrate what it means to love your neighbor as seen in verse 30, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead." In the lines of this parable we see just how to do "partnerships." What do we need?

### We Need Eyes to See

This parable makes an important distinction about all three men who walked along the road that day. Each man saw the injured man beside the road. First we find the Priest mentioned first in verse 31, "A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side." The Priest saw the man by the road and he kept on traveling.

Verse 31 also mentions a Levite heading along the same road and he too observed the wounded man, "So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side." He was in the perfect place to reach out and help be passed the man and kept on traveling.

Verse 33 introduces us to the third man in the story. The Bible tells us he was a Samaritan traveling the same road as the Priest and Levite. "But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came to where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him." The details are the same as the other two men. He too was traveling, living life. He too saw the man on the side of the road fighting for his life. The difference is that the Samaritan had his eyes open. Only the Samaritan was moved with compassion by what he saw. He was the only one of the three who demonstrated pity. His eyes were open and even more, his heart was open to what he saw.

What do you see each day? Right before us are the lives of other people. In our field of vision are the lost, hurting and needy. Do you really *see* them?

## **We Must be Willing to be Interrupted**

As we learned earlier, the religious leader questioning Jesus wanted to justify his own position before Jesus. In the parable the Priest and the Levite could both offer justification for not stopping to help the man on the road. The Samaritan did not offer excuses, he simply offered help. The Priest and Levite did not allow their respective journeys to be interrupted.

The Samaritan was willing to be interrupted. Luke 10:34 states, “He went to him.” With those words the Samaritan’s day changed course. Was he busy? Probably. Was he headed somewhere? Of course. When his eyes saw the man and when his heart was moved with pity, his day was changed.

We all are busy. We have things to do, places to be and schedules to keep. But sometimes the people places in our pathway and the opportunities God has prepared for us are not on our schedules. We must allow ourselves to be interrupted to be used by God. When we are open and responsive to God’s interruptions we move from our schedules to God’s timetable.

## **We Must be Willing to Get Involved**

The Samaritan must have surely known that helping the man along the road would not be an easy task. Helping the man would mean that he would have to get involved. Verse 34 shows no hesitation, “He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him.” His concern was no longer for himself but for the wounded man. He got involved.

This one verse is packed with actions the Samaritan took including bandaging his bleeding wounds, using oil and wine to clean them, carrying the man to an inn on his own donkey and then caring for him at the inn.

Culturally people don’t want to get involved. Opportunities pass because of what it will mean if we do get involved. Christians must get involved! God did not look upon our helpless state and say, “I don’t want to get involved.” He came and got deeply involved to help us.

## **We Must be Willing to Make a Commitment**

Not only did the Samaritan get involved, he made a commitment to whatever was necessary for the man’s wellbeing. Verse 35 says, “The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’”

Look at the level of commitment the Samaritan made. First, he stayed through the night to help the injured man because he did not leave him until the next morning. He made the commitment of time. Second, he gave a sizeable amount of money to the innkeeper and promised more if needed, all so the man would have a place to recover. He made a financial commitment to help the injured traveler. Third, he promised to check on him. He made a long-term commitment to him.

Sometimes God gives us moments to reach out and touch another life. These moments come and go like a flash. At other times, God calls us to make a commitment. We have to get and stay involved.

As Jesus closed this parable he turned his focus back to the religious leader who had first questioned him. This time Jesus posed the question, “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The man identified the Samaritan as the one who genuinely showed love and mercy. Jesus then told him, “Go and do likewise.”

God is not calling us to offer justification for what we do or do not do. He is calling us into action. As we live life we must intersect with the lives of others. Partnership is about living and doing.

## Jesus' Partnerships: "Better Together"

### Bible Study Four Summary

#### Summary:

This message shifts toward the church and how the "Better Together" principle applies within the church. In summary, as Christians, we walk this journey of life and faith together. Life is tough and we need each other every step of the way.

#### Method:

This message begins by demonstrating how we are together in Christ.

*The first movement in the message* shows three ways we are together. Together in the church (we all need a church home), Together in the family (we are part of a family of faith), and we are together on the journey (which is the heart of the "Better Together" principle in this message).

*The second movement in the message* uses some of the famous "one another" passages in the New Testament and shows how they connect with the "Better Together" principle.

*The "one another" verses conclude the message* focusing on why each is essential on our journey of faith. I use love one another, encourage one another, forgive one another, be kind and compassionate to one another, and serve one another.

#### **A Final Thought:**

The "one another" passages fit so well together with "Better Together" within the church. I would encourage any pastor to explore the 50 or more "one another" passages and read them through the lens of "Better Together." Apply the principle and use the ones that best fit their church situation.

# Jesus' Partnerships: "Better Together"

## BIBLE STUDY FOUR

### **Introduction**

This "partnership" series has focused upon the way God can use my life to touch the life of another person. In the first message we discovered that Jesus lived "in partnership" as He came here to live among us. In the second message we learned how ordinary life moments can become extraordinary moments. We must allow God to define the value of the moments of our lives. In the third message we explored the parable of the Good Samaritan and discovered what it really takes to live "in partnership."

In this message we will go in a slightly different direction. "Partnerships" are also about making an impact on the lives of those in my church. We hold life in common with the world around us but we also hold something in common with those in our church family. Throughout the week we live life together as the church and together we share the common bond of faith.

Ephesians 4:16 says, "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." This passage describes how things are to be in the body of Christ. Paul says we are one "whole body." We have been joined together. We grow together. We are built up and made stronger as we love and serve.

We are not alone. We share life and faith "in partnership", consequently making us "better together." Think on "better together."

### ***We are "Together" in the Church***

We are not designed to live this life alone, we are meant to be connected to one another. We need a church body. We are part of a church body. Don't try to do this alone!

### ***We are "Together" in the Family***

The Church is more than a religious institution. We are part of a family of faith. Look around you, right now at church. This is your spiritual family. We are family in Christ.

### ***We are "Together" on the Journey***

Where do "partnerships" really impact church? We are the only ones who understand what it's like to be on this journey of faith. People in the world don't understand what it takes to live real life for Christ. We share in this journey of faith.

Life is tough. We have the same kinds of struggles that other people have. We have issues in our families. Jobs and coworkers can be challenging. Our kids get bullied at school. Our finances can become strained. In the body of Christ we can find people who understand just how tough this journey can be.

In the New Testament there are more than 50 references to “one another” or “each other” when referring to the church. Why is this? Again, life is tough and as we live in partnership we need each other. We’ve all heard messages on the “one another” passages. Put some of these passages in the context of “partnerships” in the body of Christ:

### **Love One Another**

1 John 3:11 says, “This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.” The world is harsh. The world will not simply throw open loving arms and welcome you in. As you go along through life you might begin to wonder if anyone out there loves you. In the body of Christ love must be at the center. We are to love each other just as Christ loved us. We are to love each other because love is what helps us to forgive and gives us room to grow. Jesus stated that love must be a defining mark of a follower of Jesus as seen in John 13:35. When life gets tough the world moves toward hate this is why we need each other. Love is a necessary part of this shared journey of faith.

### **Encourage One Another**

Hebrews 3:13 reminds us of the necessity of encouragement. “But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today. . .” The journey of life can be terribly discouraging. We are reminded that we must continually offer encouragement to each other. The Bible even says to do it daily! Write a card. Make a call. Make an effort to encourage someone. Don’t wait. Someone around you needs to hear an encouraging word from you. As Hebrews reaches, do it while still today!

### **Forgive One Another**

The journey can seem impossible when someone refuses to forgive. Colossians 3:13 instructs us to forgive, “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” In life unforgiveness can destroy marriages and friendships. Payback and revenge have become hallmarks of our culture. The Church is a place founded upon the forgiveness of Christ and not upon our perfection. Because we have been forgiven, we should be willing to forgive others. As we take this journey together we all should know full well that we are not perfect people. We must forgive just as we want others to forgive us. Mistakes will happen. We will all fail along the way but inside this family of faith there must be forgiveness.

### **Be Kind and Compassionate**

Have you ever had one of those days when you feel like the last drop of kindness has dried up? As we live daily life we will experience the pain of unkind, unfeeling people. The Church should be a place where true kindness abounds. Ephesians 4:32 says, “Be kind and compassionate to one another. . .” We can share a kind word and even carry out acts of kindness with each other. The idea of compassion is that in the Church family I should find people who truly care about me! Life is tough but Church can be a place where we find a family who cares.

### **Serve One Another**

One of the great things we can do in the body of Christ is to serve one another along the way. We can use our gifts, talents and resources to make a difference right here in the family of faith. Galatians 5:13 challenges us to “Serve one another in love.” You can help

someone and someone can help you. It sounds so simple but this is what life on life is all about. God can use what I have and what I can do to make a difference in a fellow Christian's life.

Times are tough. We need each other more than ever. Who better to understand the challenges of the Christian life in these times than another Christian on the same journey? This is the time for the Church to come together not come apart. In my family of faith I will allow my life to cross paths with yours. I will allow God to use me to touch you.

## **Jesus' Partnerships: "Living Differently"**

### **Bible Study Five Summary**

#### **Summary:**

This is the final message in the series and it explores how to live a different kind of life each day. God will use us but we must be prepared for every moment.

#### **Method:**

This message outlines the basics of living the "Jesus' Partnership" principle each day.

*Live a Life Worthy of Respect* explores 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 and how we can win the respect of people in our life circle.

*Carefully Choose Your Words* explores Colossians 4:6 and how our words can make a difference in everyday life.

*Be Ready* follows three passages with a focus on being ready for any life moment that can quickly become more.

**Be ready to answer** examines 1 Peter 3:15.

**Be ready to do good** examines Titus 3: 1

**Be ready with the Gospel** examines Ephesians 6:15

*Make a Difference without Someone Asking* touches on the salt and light passages of Matthew 5:13-16. Salt and light simply do what they are supposed to do. We are to be salt and light which means we can make a difference anywhere and at any time.

The series concludes with a reference to Ephesians 5:15-16 where we are told to be very careful with our lives, living wisely and making the most of every opportunity. Just like Jesus...Partner with someone missional somewhere!

# Jesus' Partnerships: "Living Differently"

## BIBLE STUDY FIVE

### Introduction

Much of this series has been about the ways we share life in common with others. While we share commonalities we are called to be different. God provides opportunities for us to make a difference in this world and we are to live our lives in such a way that we have the maximum impact along the way. What does the Bible say about living a life that makes a difference?

### Live a Life Worthy of Respect

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 says, "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody."

This verse is very practical for "partnership" living. First, the passage reminds us to do what we are supposed to do. Work and work hard. Stay out of the business of others. Note that it is not your church life that will win the respect of outsiders; it is your daily life. Develop a pattern of daily living that honors God.

### Carefully Choose Your Words

Colossians 4:6 reminds us, "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." We must be careful about what we say. Our conversations must steer clear of profanity, impurity, gossip and slander. It is hard for someone to take seriously words about Jesus from a mouth that is harsh and that has done lots of damage along the way. Our words can open doors and they can close doors. Let your words add to the people around you. If you do this, people will listen to you when you speak up.

### Be Ready

We don't know when God will give us a moment to touch someone's life. We have to be in a state of readiness. We don't have the luxury of taking a day off from the Christian life. We have to be ready throughout each day for what God has planned for us.

#### Be ready to answer:

1 Peter 3:15 says, "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect." We don't know when the moment will come for us to speak up. At any moment God can give you the opportunity to be a witness. The Holy Spirit will guide you to speak up along the way. You might have the opportunity to speak a word of truth or offer up some encouragement to someone. Don't be silent! Be ready.

#### Be ready to do good:

Titus 3:1 says, "Be ready to do whatever is good." Any moment can be a moment when we can do good and make a difference. Be alert. Who might need help? How could you serve someone? Where could you step up? James reminds us that good works done along the way are actually a demonstration of our faith.

### **Be ready with the Gospel:**

Ephesians 6:15 says, “with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.” Readiness is part of the armor of a well prepared Christian. The Gospel is not just for Sunday morning sermons or Tuesday night visitation. Any moment can be a moment when the Gospel can be shown or shared.

### **Make a Difference Even Without Someone Asking**

Most opportunities given to us will come with little fanfare. As we just learned, we must always be ready when God blesses us with a “partnership” moment. As Christians, we really don’t need the bright light of a spotlight to make a difference. We are told to be salt and light in our world.

Listen to the words of Jesus from Matthew 5:13-16 “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Salt gives flavor to food because that is what it’s supposed to do. If it is missing from a meal you will notice. Be salt wherever you go. As you live “Life on Life” you have something to add. Do what you should do wherever you are.

Light does its job without being asked. The sun shines and offers its light and warmth to the world. The world is a dark place and life has its dark moments. Live each day as the light of Christ in your world. Jesus reminds us that light should not be hidden but put out where it can be seen. You can be a light for Christ at work, on your street, or among complete strangers. People will notice your light.

### **Conclusion**

This series started with us exploring Jesus coming to live “Live on Life” with us here. We must live life just like Jesus making the most of every moment. Listen to the words of Paul in Ephesians 5:15-16, “Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity. . .”

## PARTNERSHIP APPRECIATION

**Partnering With Someone Missional Somewhere** is a theme for local Baptist associations across North America. It is also a theme shared by many churches, fellowships and small groups.

This **BIBLE STUDY SERIES** and the supporting promotional materials have been made possible as a result of a unique partnership between your local Baptist association, the Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Leaders (SBCAL) and the North American Mission Board, SBC.

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Our prayer is that God will use the **Partnering With Someone Missional Somewhere** emphasis to move His followers to a greater involvement in what He is doing. To learn more about these ministries and others, contact your local Baptist association.

We would love to hear from you.