

## ***Joining Jesus on His Mission* by Greg Finke**

### **Devotional & Small Group Study – WEEK THREE**

#### **DAY 15 OF 42**

##### READING GUIDE:

- Read today's devotion below.
- During days 15-21 (at your own pace) read chapters 7 thru 10 from *Joining Jesus on His Mission*.
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"He who keeps on seeking finds..." (Matthew 7:8 AMP)

I enjoy jigsaw puzzles; preferably ones more challenging, at least 500 pieces. Sometimes I'm amazed that when scanning over the table, looking for that particular piece, I know that it is staring right back at me. Frustrating! But the first quick glance through the pieces usually won't help me find it. It is when I refocus more intently, continue the search, look for the subtleties, when the "lost" piece almost miraculously appears. Again, it was there all the time. I just needed to slow down and pay attention.

When we are seeking Jesus' activity in another person's life, Finke writes in chapter 7, "It's not that there is nothing to see. It's that so few of us are looking for it. But if we will seek, Jesus says in Matthew 7:8, we will find. A more precise translation of this verse would be, 'He who keeps on seeking finds...' In the original Greek, Jesus uses an ongoing verb tense for seek, indicating that our action of seeking is to be a persistent habit not an occasional hobby. Jesus promises that those who will continue seeking will find what God is showing them."

**In what areas do you need God to help you more persistently seek what He is doing in another's life so that you may join Him in His redemptive work? Invite others to pray about this for you.**

#### **DAY 16 OF 42**

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"You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord..." (Jeremiah 29:13-14)

While waiting for a new car battery to be installed, I had the chance to talk with the front desk person, Sammy. Sammy had been working there for 6 months. She had a lot of personality and was easy to talk to. She was telling me how much she loved her job and the owners. I asked, "How did you get the job? Did you already have a connection with the owners?" She replied, "I love cars and had been dreaming for awhile about working in this field. Then one day, I just happened to be driving by the shop, when I had a feeling I needed to pull in. I walked in the door and introduced myself. The next day my phone rang and I got the job!" (Interesting to note: the shop wasn't advertising a job opening.)

When Sammy said that she had this feeling that she needed to pull into the shop, my spiritual radar went right off! At this moment I was paying attention. I clearly saw God doing something in Sammy's life. I replied, "Wow, to me that is one of those God moments. I work for the church and I believe that God purposefully meant for you to walk in this place to be blessed with this job." She replied, "Yes!" She didn't respond too much more on the God part but her posture was positive and we talked a bunch more afterwards.

Finke writes in chapter 7, "So, how do we seek, recognize and respond to what Jesus is already doing in the lives of the people we are enjoying? We start paying attention to what is already being shown to us."

Some back story...the owners of this auto shop are Christians whom I've known for several years. They proudly display a corkboard in the lobby (which Sammy would face every working day) with pictures/words conveying the message of how Jesus is the most important thing in their

lives. Funny thing, while waiting I noticed a Christian magazine called *Good News* in the magazine rack.

No doubt that the owners were already witnessing their faith to Sammy and enjoying life with her. I hope God used me and, as a regular customer, will continue to use me in whatever way to join them, as we all join Jesus on His mission.

**What will be your story today?** Pay attention. Expect to see God in action. He is on the move all around us working in the lives of all we encounter.

#### **DAY 17 OF 42**

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"...the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." (Luke 17:21b ESV)

I'm sorry, Bette Midler, but you had it completely wrong. In her song *From a Distance*, she sang the line "God is watching us from a distance." Incorrect (with accompanying heavily pressed buzzer sound)!

Finke explains in chapter 8 that, "the kingdom of God is God himself. Wherever God is present and active, his kingdom is present and active." He goes on to share that the kingdom of God is near, not at a distance, because of one reason--Jesus Christ. "The kingdom of God was now literally entering the created world through the incarnation of God himself in the man, Jesus of Nazareth."

**What does it mean in your life to know that Jesus and His kingdom are not far away but in your midst? How does this impact your mindset as you join Jesus on His mission?**

#### **DAY 18 OF 42**

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"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:15 ESV)

When we typically think of the word repent, we think "stop sinning"; it is more than that. Stopping a sinful act is a behavior change. Repenting of your sins is a lifestyle change.

Finke explains near the end of chapter 8, "the Greek word which is translated here as repent is the word meta-noeo which is bigger than stop doing naughty things. Literally meta-noeo means a changing of the mind which is accompanied by a corresponding changed direction of life. In other words, Jesus is inviting us to completely reorient our minds and lives around this new reality of the kingdom being redemptively present and active around us. He is saying, 'Reorient your thinking and presumptions around it. Reorient your values and priorities around it. Reorient how you interpret what you are seeing and hearing around it. And believe this good news I am telling you.'"

**Jesus is calling you to repent and believe in the gospel, what is your response? How will you repent in the fullest sense of the word? Now in day 18 of this 42-day journey, what things of your mind and heart have you found already going through a reorientation (the Spirit and the Word's doing in your life)?**

## DAY 19 OF 42

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In chapter 9 Finke asks the question, "What does the kingdom of God look like?" For those who follow Jesus we see it clearly through the Word and the sacraments, we see it in the fruit of the Spirit evidenced in the lives of His followers, and we see it when we see Jesus-followers loving others.

But what about someone who does not yet know the good news of Jesus? How do they see the kingdom of God present and near? Finke explains that the kingdom of God will look like "where love, hope, or redemption are needed,"

Let's discover this by looking at Jesus...

"Jesus went across to Mount Olives, but he was soon back in the Temple again. Swarms of people came to him. He sat down and taught them. The religion scholars and Pharisees led in a woman who had been caught in an act of adultery. They stood her in plain sight of everyone and said, 'Teacher, this woman was caught red-handed in the act of adultery. Moses, in the Law, gives orders to stone such persons. What do you say?' They were trying to trap him into saying something incriminating so they could bring charges against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger in the dirt. They kept at him, badgering him. He straightened up and said, 'The sinless one among you, go first: Throw the stone.' Bending down again, he wrote some more in the dirt. Hearing that, they walked away, one after another, beginning with the oldest. The woman was left alone. Jesus stood up and spoke to her. 'Woman, where are they? Does no one condemn you?' 'No one, Master.' 'Neither do I,' said Jesus. 'Go on your way. From now on, don't sin.'" (John 8:1-10 MSG)

**How did the woman see love, hope and redemption? How was grace applied to her? What do you learn from Jesus in this account that can be applied to your life?**

Finke states, "the bottom line is this: if we see a need for redemption and restoration in a human being, whatever it might be, we can recognize that the kingdom of God is nearby and active. Why? Because that's where Jesus will be." It is then our opportunity to join Him on His mission.

**So look at your life, at those around you, and ask yourself these questions...What's Jesus up to today? Where can grace be applied?**

## DAY 20 OF 42

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"Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." (1 Corinthians 12:27 ESV)

There was a time in my life when I felt miserable, depressed, and rejected. And then the phone rang. My friend Paul called me out of (seemingly) nowhere, "How are you doing, Craig? You don't sound like yourself..." As the conversation continued, a weight lifted. I felt the beginnings of being restored. I heard the good news again. I firmly believe God used my friend Paul to call me at exactly the right time. Not kind of the right time. Exactly the right time.

Have you had a similar experience? How has God used another to restore you with His good news? How has another been the body of Christ to?

In chapter 10, Finke explains, "Being 'the body of Christ' is not simply a theological metaphor Paul utilizes. It is a statement of fact. Because the Spirit of Jesus lives in us, we are literally the visible body of the invisible Jesus to the people around us...Through our hands people experience the hands of Jesus. Through our voice people hear the voice of Jesus. Through our service people experience the care of Jesus. Through our face people see the face of Jesus."

Look at the those in your life.

**Remember how God used others to share the good news of Jesus to you.**

**Then ask yourself...**

**Who in my life is "ready for some news that is good"?**

**Who in my life is "ready for a little hope, a little help, a little grace"?**

**Who in my life is "ready for a cool cup of water of truth"?**

#### **DAY 21 OF 42**

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"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6 ESV)

Finke offers these words at the end of chapter 10, "When we miss our missional opportunity, when we blow by our missional turn, we repent and he recalculates. We may not be very good at being missionaries, but he is very good at being God. He's got this."

So when it comes to God's Plan for Sharing the love of Jesus, we trust in Him with all our heart. We lean not on our own understanding. In all our ways, we acknowledge Him. And He will make straight our paths.

**How does trusting in God provide you with encouragement as you join Jesus on His mission?**

#### **Week 3 Small Group Study**

In his book, Finke recommends the following 5 questions (in bold) to be asked at small group gatherings. An additional question or two are added to help you unpack the bolded questions:

1. **How did you SEE God at work in your life this week?** What's God trying to have you pay attention to?
2. **What has God been teaching you in HIS WORD?** (Like through the daily devotions in this booklet) What's God inviting you to believe?
3. **What kind of CONVERSATIONS are you having with pre-Christians?**  
Finke wrote, "The practice of talking with people happens in many ways. However, all of them boil down to this: Jesus can do more with two people who are talking with each other than He can with two people who are successfully ignoring each other. So what kind of conversations are you having with the people around you?"
4. **What good can we DO around here?** What is God asking of you and how do you think you are to respond? What good can we do *as a group* in our communities to show Jesus' love?
5. **How can we help you in PRAYER?** What do you want us to ask you about next week?