

KANSAS COMMUNITIES MINISTRY UPDATE

"My objective is to know Christ in my own life in ever-increasing depth and to make disciples and develop laborers at all times, under any conditions, in every place I go"

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

"For the love of Christ controls us, since we have concluded this, that Christ died for all; therefore all died. And He died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised" (NET Bible, used by permission)

Growth in Christlikeness

The verses above remind us that after we have believed in Jesus for eternal life (John 3:16), we are to no longer live for ourselves; we are to live for Jesus. But how do we do this?

The answer is easy. And very hard. On the one hand, we progressively, daily give up living for ourselves as we keep looking to Jesus. We realize daily, in ever-increasing ways, that indeed Christ's love controls (or "constrains" or "compels") us. He is the One who is the origin of that daily increasing walk. His love compels us. We experience this as we spend daily, premium time with Him getting to know Him.

It is also very hard as our "old man" (Romans 6:6) keeps getting in our way. He keeps getting revived! Let's trust Christ to help us reckon ourselves as dead to sin (Romans 6:11) and alive to God.

So, naturally, we proclaim Christ!

JB Phillips, an Anglican clergyman, began translating Scripture into modern English for his youth group which met in bomb shelters during WW II. He subsequently began publishing these translations in 1947 and continued to work on these over the next several decades. This passage from Col. 1:28-29 has become very well-known among the Kansas Navigators:



"So, naturally, we proclaim Christ! We warn everyone we meet, and we teach everyone we can, all that we know about him, so that, if possible, we may bring every man up to his full maturity in Christ. This is what I am working at all the time, with all the strength that God gives me."

Col. 1:28-29, JB Phillips translation

Yet I must ask myself, just how "naturally" do I proclaim Christ, either to someone who has not yet believed in Jesus for eternal life or to someone who has believed but needs to grow (everyone else!). It certainly at times feels as "unnatural" as talking to a statue! (see above photo)

I sometimes think that it is up to me to "manufacture" a key question to lead into a spiritual discussion. But in reality God provides opportunities if I have eyes to see them. I am reminded of a patient in my practice years ago who expressed hopelessness and lack of purpose, particularly as he was nearing life's end. I asked if he would like to look at Scripture with me to explore God's plan for him and to demonstrate true hope and purpose. He agreed and I shared the good news of the gospel with him.

Let's pray for increased awareness of opportunities, boldness in speaking and genuine love and concern for others as we "naturally proclaim Christ, warning everyone we meet, teaching everyone we can, all we know about him..." — David Dennis



Goads and Nails

*Excerpt from Goads and Nails,
Volume 1, pages 47-49*

*"The only Ability God requires is
our Availability."*

"...we need not be wise by the world's standards, nor do we need to ... have positions of influence and authority... The main force of this statement to me has always been the magnitude of the significance of simply being available to the Lord. We are familiar with His invitations repeated throughout the New Testament: "Come and see," "Come unto Me," and "Come and drink" which initiated relationships with Himself. What is arresting, however, is the power and extent of transformation that takes place from this one act of simply making yourself available to the Lord.

What does this say to our lives? Fundamentally if we want to reflect our Lord and represent Him, we must spend much time with Him. 2 Cor. 3:18, "But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory..." - Richard Spann

Simple Discipleship, Part 3

Continuing our review of this great little book "Simple Discipleship" by Dana Allin (Pub. Navpress, © 2018), we will build on the first two principles:

1. Jesus focused His efforts where His disciples needed to grow. In other words, focus on the disciple, serve him/her rather than trying meet your own agenda. 2. Jesus ensured growth in His disciples was connected to the Gospel. In other words, motivation for spiritual growth should not be guilt/obligation-driven, but should be grace-driven.

This month we are looking at the third principle: Jesus engaged in "just in time" training. For example, in Luke 11:1 the disciples asked "Lord, teach us to pray." They had a need to be taught how to pray at that time. Another example is in Mark 9 where the disciples were not able to cast out the demon from the young boy. Rather than merely "teaching" the disciples, He "trained" them. They needed to know what was going wrong in their approach.

J. Warner Wallace, a former homicide detective and current Christian apologist (<https://coldcasechristianity.com>) speaks a lot about this topic as he trains young people in witnessing. He doesn't just stand at the front of the room and lecture on how to share one's faith. Instead he arranges to take students to various locations, including college campuses as well as LDS locations and puts them in situations where they really need and want to learn how to give a reasonable defense for their faith. He also contrasts "teaching" with "training."

How might this translate in how you work with individuals? Perhaps it means taking someone with you when you give a talk. Perhaps it means having them prepare and give part of a message. Or maybe it means going on a "field trip" and just talk with people downtown some Saturday evening. Or maybe it means talking in depth about an issue in their own life that is challenging and looking up Scripture which addresses that particular problem. Let's take some time to brainstorm what "training" might like in our own ministries.

Whatever the Lord might be calling you to, remember to not just "teach" but also to "train." It is much more effective!

