

PURSUING PEOPLE IN YOUR DNA LIKE JESUS PURSUES US

I. LEARNING HOW TO PURSUE EACH OTHER – SO THAT YOU ALL GROW AS DISCIPLES OF JESUS

Luke 15:4

What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?

What we really need – is what only He can give.

John 4:9-10

The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”

Pursuing people was personally costly for Jesus.

Matthew 23:37

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.

Real community is essential, beautiful and requires hard work.

- It’s essential because it is by God’s Spirit, who dwells in all who believe, that God’s work continues to form you as a disciple of Jesus.
- It’s beautiful because, it’s in community where the visible expression of disciples being progressively transformed happens.
- It requires hard work because God uses relationships in community to expose what is still unchanged, until your life as a disciple reflects the perfect life of Christ.

All believers share in the INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE OF CHRIST.

Hebrew 7:16

...a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life.

Because we're joined with Jesus, Peter says we are now....

1 Peter 2:9

A chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

The indestructible life of Christ is not the promise of escape from hard work that close relationship requires.

- It's God's promise that He empowers our transformation, so we become His agents of change in our DNA.

Philippians 2:12-13

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

- It's also His promise that GOD'S WORD – WILL BE THE LAST WORD OVER MY LIFE.

Romans 8:31-34

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Philippians 3:8-11

So that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

ESV Study Bible:

The goal of trusting in Christ is to know him, that is, to know Christ in a personal relationship, and also to know the power of his resurrection—namely, the power Christ exerts now from the right hand of God. But this power is made known - as the believer shares the same kind of sufferings Jesus faced.

To be linked with Jesus in power of his resurrection means we are linked with him in the experience of his sufferings, when we come close with each other in relationships.

Four Practical Priestly ways to move toward those in your DNA:

1. It means engaging and entangling your life with theirs.

1 Thessalonians 2:8

So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

2. It means moving toward their problems and praises, so they become my problems and praises.

Galatians 6:2

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

3. It means their battle against sin and for grace to keep in step with the spirit, becomes my battle against sin and for grace to keep in step with the Spirit.

Galatians 5:24-25

If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

4. It means that what moves their heart to cry out to God in prayer is what moves my heart to cry out to God in prayer.

Hebrews 13:3

Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.

II. LISTENING IN A WAY THAT DEEPENS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF EACH OTHER

Proverbs 20:5

The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.

1. The author is actually pointing out that there is often a gap between what lies deep in a person's thoughts and intentions and what he/she consciously thinks, feels and values.

DNA's provide opportunities for many conversations that can expose your inner life as a disciple.

Casual conversations are good and necessary - it's where you begin to get to know each other.

- You must take time to learn the everyday things of their lives.

- You become familiar with their names and details, likes and dislikes, the important people in their story.

Exodus 33:13

If I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight.

2. Deeper conversations reveal the gaps between what a person says they believe and what they actually believe.

- A. Ask lots questions that don't have a yes or no answer.

Did you talk to your dad about the letter? -versus- Tell me about your conversation with your dad.

- B. Ask a combination of survey and focused questions.

Survey: Where else do find yourself getting angry? What kinds of situations?

Focused: Can you tell me a little bit more about what was going on when you lost your temper?

- C. Remember that different questions reveal different kinds of information.

- What? - Gives you general information - What did you say?

- How? - The way something was done - How did you tell her?

- Why? - Their goals and purposes - Why did you decide not to tell him?

- When? - Gives order of events - When did you tell her, was it before or after she emailed you?

- How often? - Reveals patterns - How often do your visits with end this way?

- D. Ask a progressive line of questions based on what information you previously uncovered.

These questions will help fill in the gaps.

You said that you yelled at the kids for arguing in the car after just one block. What was the rest of the drive like after that?

GROUP EXERCISE

Scenario:

John was a very successful attorney, he was well respected, a deacon at his church and admired by many. Behind the scenes, his marriage was a wreck, his kids were distant, and he said he lived life tittering on the edge

of a cliff and that all depended on whether or not he could solve the next problem that came up. And there was always a next problem to be solved.

John was one of two boys growing up. His dad was a hard-working, blue collar pillar of his community and provider for his family. His older brother was, what he described as, the artistic free-spirit type marching to his own beat. His dad and older brother were like oil and water and in constant conflict.

John watched this dynamic escalate over the years and came to the conclusion that if he just kept his nose to the grindstone and give his dad what his brother wouldn't, then perhaps he could escape the fate of his older brother. So, John worked hard in school, went to college, and was accepted into a prestigious law school.

At a grad party, he drove home intoxicated and was arrested in their small town. John called his dad to come bail him out. They said nothing to each other in the police station. But then in the car as his dad opened his mouth to give him "the speech", John turned to him, pointed his finger in his face, and warned him, "Don't say anything, I have given you everything you wanted!" Then they drove home in silence.

DNA Discussion Questions:

I want you to take one of the categories about community that we talked about and answer the question I posed. Then I want the others in your DNA to ask one or two of the kind of questions I suggested that can help you navigate toward a deeper conversation.

ESSENTIAL: Briefly describe a time when God used your DNA to help form you in Christ.

BEAUTIFUL: When have you experienced or witnessed the power and presence of God at work in your life because of an interaction you had in your DNA that encouraged you?

HARD WORK: Describe a hard time when your DNA pressed into you and exposed or challenged something that was initially hard to hear, or you were surprised by how, what you said you believed, wasn't what you actually believed in terms of how you were living?