

For the PEARL series, our weekly “Sermon Based Discussion Guide” comes out of our PEARL Devotional Guidebook. These will not be directly based off of Jeff’s messages for these five weeks.

Attached is this week’s devotional followed by the Group Discussion Guide.

PEARL

Guidebook

THE COMPASS CHURCH EVANGELISM DEVOTIONAL

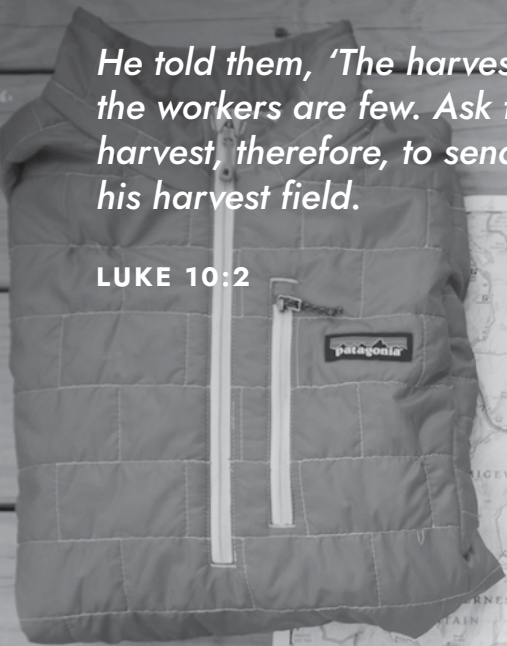
DEVOTIONAL
WEEK 5



THE **COMPASS** CHURCH
thecompass.net

He told them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'

LUKE 10:2



WEEK 5 | DAY 1

How Do I Develop the Habit of Prayerfully Pursuing People?

Have you ever wondered what Jesus would do if He were to walk in your shoes today? What would He wake up thinking about? What would He do before heading out the door to work or school? What would He listen to on the way? Who would He eat lunch with? What would He focus on, talk about, prioritize? Would He be more proactive or reactive in His interactions with others? What would captivate and drive Him? As we study the life and teachings of Jesus, we actually have a pretty good window into the answers to these questions.

One thing for sure, prayer was extremely significant in the life of Jesus. Check out the following scripture passages:

“One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.”

LUKE 6:12-16

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”

JOHN 17:20-21

“He told them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’”

LUKE 10:2

Did you notice the significance of Jesus’ priority and practice of prayer? Consider these observations and how they may play out in your life:

- In *Luke 6*, Jesus prayed seeking guidance from God the Father regarding in whom to invest. Many people were drawn to Jesus because of His teaching and miracles. He needed guidance from the Father regarding in whom to invest more deeply, so He asked.
- In the middle of the most stressful time of His life (right before His arrest and crucifixion), Jesus prayed specifically for people to come to faith in Him through the work of His followers, through us (*John 17*)!
- In *Luke 10:2*, Jesus sent His followers on mission! At the outset, He told them that the harvest is plentiful. In other words, many around them were ready to hear and respond to the Gospel. The problem was that the workers are few. There weren’t enough people with the message of the Gospel going out and sharing the Good News with those ready to respond. The solution was to ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers. Jesus instructed His followers to pray for more workers; then He sent them out to find them. Where did they look for help bringing in the harvest? They looked in the harvest itself. God’s plan to reach the world with His Good News is to engage us, His followers, in reaching people who need to hear. New believers then join the work force and share with those around them, and so it continues!

REFLECT

1. What kinds of things do you find yourself typically praying for?
2. What is your response to the idea that the “*harvest is plentiful*”? How might these words of Jesus apply to your situation today?
3. Who are the people in your life who need the hope of Jesus? Make a list of 10, then pray and ask the Lord to help you zero in on five of them to focus on intentionally.

*Now the tax collectors and sinners
were all gathering around to hear
Jesus. But the Pharisees and the
teachers of the law muttered, 'This man
welcomes sinners and eats with them.'*

LUKE 15:1-2



WEEK 5 | DAY 2

How Do I Develop the Habit of Relational Eating?

Have you ever stopped to think about how much of life, community and connection with others revolves around food? During the Covid-19 pandemic, this has become especially apparent to many of us as we've had to figure out where and how to connect with others, often without being able to meet in homes, restaurants and cafés. It's true, isn't it? There's something about sharing food that brings people together and contributes to the building of relationships. Most of us enjoy partaking in food, we all need to eat, and we often slow down and focus over food. Yes, eating is a great way to connect with others and grow relationships.

In Hebrew culture, eating with someone (often referred to as "reclining at table") was actually more than simply sharing food. It signified associating with them. By choosing to eat with someone, you were communicating that you were okay identifying with them, being lumped together with them, having them reflect on you. In this way, eating with others is a powerful form of being incarnational (becoming like someone else in order to connect and relate). This was extremely significant and could even be scandalous in a largely segregated first century society where "like" hung out with "like." Eating with someone who lived by a different social and/or moral code was not the norm and very much frowned upon. Our current reality certainly has some similarities with life in the time of Jesus.

Consider this account from the Gospel of Mark:

“As he (Jesus) walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector’s booth. ‘Follow me,’ Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Levi’s house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: ‘Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ On hearing this, Jesus said to them, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.’”

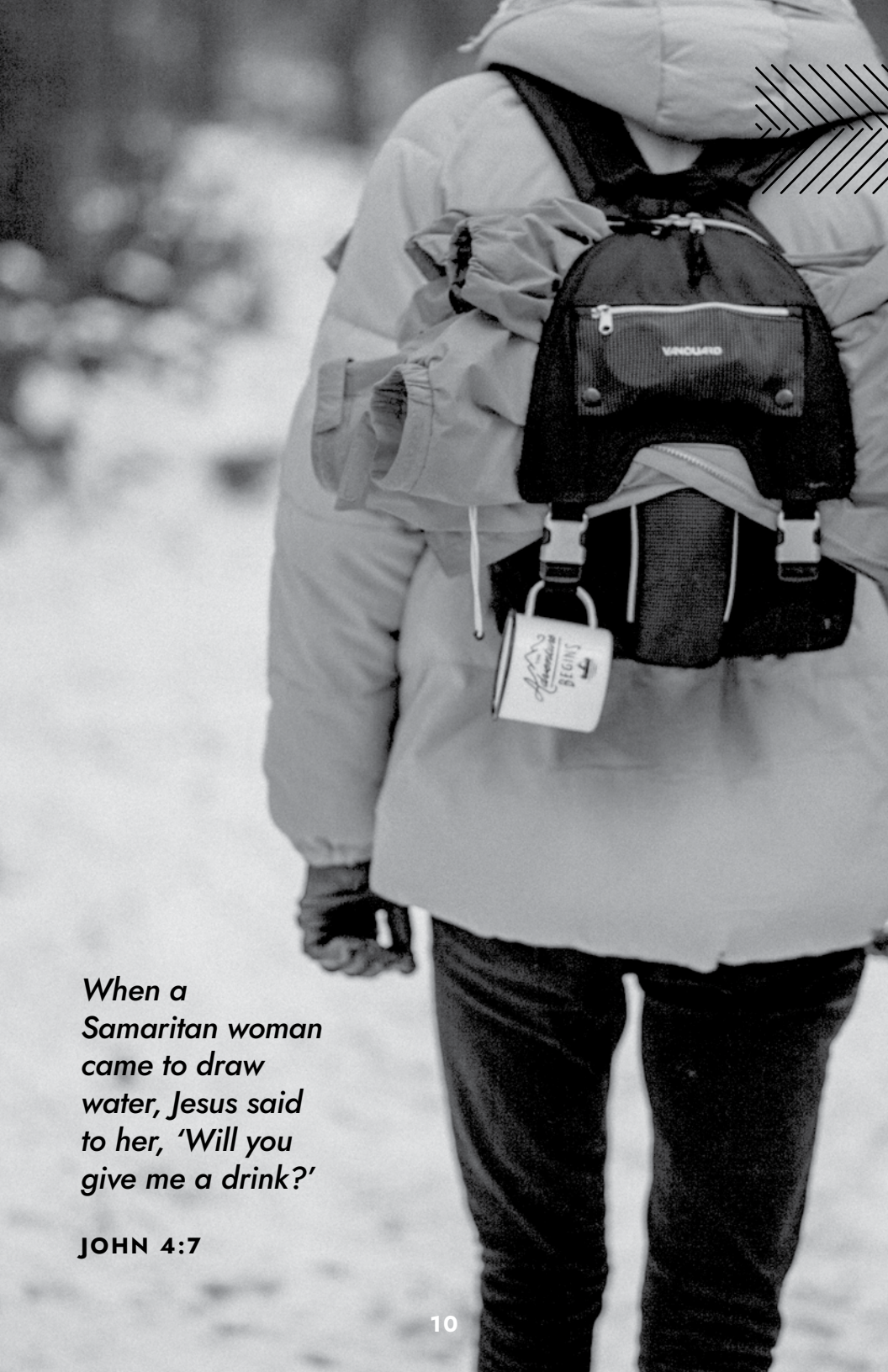
MARK 2:14-17

Tax collectors during the time of Christ were disrespected, distrusted and generally dishonest. They betrayed their own people to the Roman government and enjoyed the financial gain at the expense of those suffering around them. They were viewed poorly, largely because they simply weren’t honorable, moral people. In spite of this, Jesus did not hesitate to call Levi (commonly known as Matthew) to become one of His closest followers. And Jesus didn’t just see Matthew, he saw Matthew’s friends as well, people that the religious establishment avoided. He had no problem associating with those despised and rejected. And in this context, we get one of the most revolutionary statements that Jesus ever made, a statement that shapes our interaction with the world thousands of years later.

“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

MARK 2:17

Whether interacting with those similar to us or those very different from us, sharing a table with others is a great way to deepen relationships and to open up the door for spiritual conversation.



When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Will you give me a drink?'

JOHN 4:7

WEEK 5 | DAY 3

How Do I Ask Questions that Lead to Spiritual Conversation?

In the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), Jesus asks 307 questions, He is asked 183 questions, and He only gives a direct answer to three of these. Similar to His use of parables, Jesus employed a brilliant strategy of using questions to draw people into a process of understanding.

In his book, *Jesus is the Question*, pastor and educator, Martin Copenhaver, speaks of Christ's methodology, "The goal is not to communicate knowledge but to elicit new understanding in the listener. Information is not the goal. Transformation is.... Answers can be offered as a conclusion. Questions are an invitation to further reflection. For the most part, answers close and questions open...."

Jesus was interested in a lot more than passing on head knowledge, He wanted to connect relationally and change hearts. In our desire to model our interactions with others after Christ's example, the use of questions is a powerful tool!

Consider a handful of the questions Jesus asked. You might find it helpful/interesting to check out the questions within the context of the broader passages.

“When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, ‘Do you want to get well?’”

JOHN 5:6

“Why do you call me good?”

LUKE 18:19

“What do you want me to do for you?”

LUKE 18:41

“‘You don’t know what you are asking,’ Jesus said. ‘Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?’”

MARK 10:38

In some cases, like the woman at the well (*John 4*), Jesus asked a question in order to start a conversation. It was a legitimate question out of real need, He was thirsty. When we engage people from a place of humility and need, it can open up relational doors. Once the conversation had started, He continually steered it toward spiritual/life transformation.

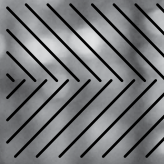
In other cases (*John 5* and both *Luke 18* passages), His questions probed deep into the person’s heart and motivations, causing them to face who they were, who He was and their preconceived ideas and beliefs.

Still in other situations (*Mark 10*), His questions were intended to push people to deeper commitment to Him and understanding of His plan.

Church planter and author, Matt Tebbe, puts it this way, “Jesus is the Master of questions. He expertly digs down into reality to produce both self- and God-awareness in others. If we are going to be on mission with Him, we must become careful and wise in asking good question....”

Our reality is that we aren’t Jesus, but as His followers, we are seeking to be like Him. Here are a few pointers that might be helpful in your use of questions with your PEARL/person/people:

- Ask open questions. These are questions that cause them to think and share (try not to ask yes/no questions). “What do you think?” “How does that make you feel?”
- Ask authentic questions. You want to hear and understand instead of driving your agenda.



But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles.

GALATIANS 1:15-16



WEEK 5 | DAY 4

How Do I Share My Story in Spiritual Conversation?

The most powerful apologetic for a disciple of Jesus is an authentic life lived in relationship with God and people. To put it differently, it's not just what we say that communicates our belief in Christ, but it's also how we live. Have you found this to be true? It is one thing to believe intellectually, it is a completely different thing to live out that belief daily.

The Bible has quite a bit to say about this interplay between our words and actions. Consider the following verses:

“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

COLOSSIANS 3:17

The Apostle Paul makes it clear here that God doesn't just want that which comes out of our mouths to be “true, noble, right, pure, lovely and admirable” (*Philippians 4:8*), He desires that our actions and deeds are lined up with His heart as well. Our words are not enough. Our actions also need to be done in the name of Jesus.

“Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.”

1 JOHN 3:18

In agreement with Paul, the Apostle John says that our talk isn't enough on its own. In order for our words to hold weight with others, what we say always needs to be backed up with how we live our lives.

This is where the power of story comes in. Have you ever noticed what happens in a presentation or sermon when a story, especially one that is personal, is shared? Almost as one, the audience's gaze shifts upwards and all eyes focus in on the speaker. People love a good story but not just in presentations and sermons. By far the majority of stories are told one-on-one or in smaller groups. Good stories pass the "RAP test".

Relatable: Can others relate to the point or message of the story you tell? You might need to contextualize your story in order for it to connect with your listeners.

Authentic: Is my story real and true? Dramatic isn't bad, but exaggeration and tall tales aren't helpful when you share your life with others through story.

Personal: Does my story pull back the curtain and reveal something about myself? So often when we open up to others, they reciprocate and a depth of connection occurs.

So, you might ask, what does the harmony of our words and deeds have to do with the power of story?

- It is through the revealing of our stories that our words are often validated. We can share important truths with our words, but when we back these up with something relatable, authentic and personal from our lives, it connects with peoples' hearts.
- As we share the story of how God has intersected with our lives personally, we can help people see what it could look like for God to connect with their story.

Think of it in terms of: *My Story, Your Story, God's Story*

As I share *My Story* with you, points of connection emerge that relate to *Your Story*. You see how *God's Story* converges with *My Story*, and you understand how *God's Story* could intersect with *Your Story*. Here's an example: I share my story of experiencing loneliness with a friend. In the midst of this struggle, God showed up and met me in my need. I help my friend see how God, in the same way, could meet their need, regardless of what it might be.

They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

ACTS 2:45



WEEK 5 | DAY 5

How Do I Tangibly Love People into the Kingdom?

You might remember the story. The couple was young, newly married and very poor. In fact, they were so poor that they had no money to spare to buy each other gifts for their first Christmas together. He so wanted to buy her something special to communicate his love. So, he sold his most valuable possession, a silver pocket watch, and bought her a special comb for her beautiful long hair. She also longed to give him something that would in a small way express her affection for him. So, she cut her hair and sold it to a wig maker and bought him a silver chain for his pocket watch. While the gifts ended up not being “useful” from a practical perspective, what touching, tangible expressions of sacrificial love! It turned out that the love that they both expressed to each other truly was the gift!

Two important aspects of communicating tangible love are highlighted in this story:

Intentionality: Both the husband and the wife were intentional about thinking through an expression of love that would be meaningful to the other. As a student of their mate, they each were able to come up with a fitting gift that would communicate love to the other.

Sacrifice: Both the husband and the wife sacrificed something very valuable to themselves in order to express their love in a tangible way.

In *Acts 2:42*, we read about exciting growth and development of the early church, including numerical growth as new believers joined the fledgling community. Here’s how the passage concludes, “...And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” (*Acts 2:47b*)

What was it about the early church that attracted people to make the significant, life altering switch, often at a steep price, in order to join? There are a number of potential answers to this question. Things like:

- radical, yet attractive message
- welcoming community
- signs and wonders

You might venture to say that one of the attractive attributes of the early church which most contributed to drawing new people in, was its commitment to loving tangibly.

“They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.”

ACTS 2:45

Talk about intentionality and sacrifice! They saw and understood the needs around them. Their eyes were wide open – no averting their gaze or pretending not to see. Paying attention and being aware of needs around us is crucial for our PEARL loving habits and is also personally honoring to those we are called to love. But they didn't stop with knowledge and understanding, they also got practical. They saw needs and met them at their own expense – literally! Like the newlywed couple and their Christmas gifts, they sold their things in order to live out tangible love. They sacrificially met material needs while loving people into the Kingdom. That's commitment! That's convicting!

REFLECT

1. Think of a time when you genuinely felt loved by someone? What was it about the situation that really touched you? How did intentionality and sacrifice play into it?
2. What would it look like for you to tangibly love your PEARL with intentionality and sacrifice?
3. What will you do and when will you do it this week?

Group Discussion Guide

CONVERSATION KICK-STARTER

If you won a million dollars what would you do with it? How much would you spend on yourself and loved ones? How much would you spend on others and the community?

DEVOTIONAL DISCUSSION

- What challenged or impacted you from your reading and journaling this week?
- What from your processing this week are you feeling prompted by God to act on?

Group Facilitator | Consider picking one question from each Daily Reflection and discussing as a group.

PEARL in Practice

We have been discussing a particular technique for relational evangelism called PEARL – Pray, Eat, Ask, Reveal and Love. PEARL is one way to process how to take practical steps in sharing your faith with another person.

Read *John 4:1-42*.

- What do you notice about the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman? What were some of the ways Jesus blessed her?
- How does Jesus' example correlate to loving your own neighbors?
- Which of the everyday ways to love your neighbor found in the PEARL acronym do you most look forward to practicing? Which do you find most challenging?

GROUP REFLECTION

1. As a group, read and pray through the following PEARL commitment:
 - P. I commit to **pray** for my neighbors. My example is Jesus, who started His earthly mission with prayer (*Luke 6:12-16*). Prayer is both how I discover my mission and how I do the mission of Jesus.
 - E. I commit to **eat** with my neighbors. My example is Jesus, who consistently shared meals with the “sinners” (*Matthew 9:9-13*). Eating with others is how I move a relationship from an acquaintance to a friendship.
 - A. I commit to **ask** good questions and listen to my neighbors. My example is Jesus, who loved others by asking questions and then listening to them (*Luke 18:40-42*). Asking and listening is how I give dignity to others, and it is a gracious expression of love.
 - R. I commit to **reveal** my story with my neighbors. My example is Jesus, who shared the Good News of His own story with others (*John 3:1-17*). Sharing my story gives others a clear understanding of how God’s love and the life of Jesus can change their lives.
 - L. I commit to **love** my neighbors by serving. My example is Jesus, who did not come to be served, but to serve others (*Matthew 20:28*). Serving others is a tangible way I can demonstrate the love of God to others.
2. What is your next step toward living out this PEARL commitment?

