

CALLED TO MISSION

INTRODUCTION

Called To Mission (CTM) is an addition to the Called To Obedience (CTO) life-to-life discipleship materials. The purpose of Called To Mission is to lead those who believe and follow Christ to a place of intentional fruitfulness, living out the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20. Believers who have experienced the process of godly pruning through biblical discipleship will grow in maturity and godliness so that their lives become attractive to the lost and hurting individuals in their circle of influence. Led and empowered by the Spirit, they then find themselves in a place of readiness to bear Christ empowered fruit through outreach to a lost world. The CTM materials are designed to provide simple and practical tools that help believers be intentional and effective in building relationships across which they can lovingly speak the truth of the gospel.

For those who have engaged in the CTO life-to-life discipleship (or any other biblically based discipleship), these CTM materials are designed to provide the next set of tools for the natural progression of that disciple's life – living Christ outward toward fruitfulness.

I. Examining biblically based discipleship principles

CTO, or other biblically based discipleship, helps believers learn how to live obedient, transformed lives out of a deep and abiding love for the Lord and others, encouraging fulfillment of The Great Commandment.

“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Mark 12:30-31

II. Applying the spiritual disciplines learned in CTO or other biblical discipleship prepares believers to live a life of submission to God by removing barriers to fellowship with the Father and fruitfulness in his kingdom:

- A. Spiritual pruning through confession, forgiveness of sins and reconciliation of past issues
- B. Spiritual growth through trusting in God's sovereignty while facing trials, testing, and even suffering in the joy of the Lord
- C. Obedience to God's Word and submission to his guidance
- D. Turning from trust in self to complete trust and dependence on Jesus Christ as giver and sustainer of all
- E. Relinquishing personal rights and submitting to God's plan rather than one's own plan

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. ‘This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

These things I command you, so that you will love one another.”

John 15:1-17

III. Moving forward, these Called To Mission materials provide the opportunity for:

- A. Developing the heart of God for those who are without hope

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:16

- B. Developing focus to become intentional about the work of God’s mission
- C. Instructing through the Word of God, by the Spirit of God, in the context of the people of God
- D. Utilizing helpful tools
- E. Bearing fruit through an abiding relationship in Christ
- F. Living out “The Great Commission” in the spirit of the “Great Command”

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19-20

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 13:34-35

IV. Introducing CTM materials in small groups helps develop life application of The Great Commandment as it works itself out in The Great Commission, leading them toward becoming:

- A. Loving toward all men
- B. Missional in their thinking
- C. Intentional in focus
- D. Active in reaching out to the lost

V. Studying the Scriptures will ignite hearts concerning the mission of reaching the lost:

- A. Cultivate an understanding about the fate of the lost which Jesus revealed as he shared the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31.

- 1. The lost man was in hell, a place of unending torment.

“There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table.

Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’” [Emphasis added]

Luke 16:19-24

- a. He could see bliss from his place of torment. He envied and regretted what he was missing, v. 23.
 - b. He was in unceasing agony from the fires of hell, vv. 23-24.
 - c. He begged for pity but none came, v. 24.
 - d. He was apparently totally isolated without companionship; there was no “party” with other sinners.
 - 2. The lost man was in a place of eternal separation from God.

“But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has

been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.”

Luke 16:25-26

- a. He remembered the loss of all pleasures of life and now faced only misery and torment, v. 25.
 - b. He saw glory - the comfort and joy – but they were out of his reach, v. 25.
 - c. He was separated by a great chasm that he could not cross, v. 26.
 - d. He came to know that his fate was irreversible and would not change for all eternity, v. 26.
 - e. He came to understand that God’s decisions are final.
 - f. He realized that no one could wait until eternity to begin a relationship with God.
3. The lost man was in a place of conscious regret.

“And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house-- for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’

But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’” [Emphasis added]

Luke 16:27-30

- a. He became concerned for those on earth whom he loved, vv. 27-28.
 - b. He hoped his loved ones would believe the message about eternal life and punishment, v. 28.
 - c. He came to believe that Hell is so bad that those who are hopeless need to be warned against it, vv. 27-28.
 - d. He begged for another chance. If Abraham would send someone to help his loved ones, maybe he would also send someone to help him, v. 30.
 - e. He agonized for his loved ones; apparently he had not witnessed to them or set a good example for them.
 - f. He learned that all the pleasures of the world are not worth an eternity in Hell.
- B. Cultivate a heart for the hopeless. Paul demonstrated a passionate heart for his fellow Jews who were lost.

“I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.” [Emphasis added]

Romans 9:1-4

1. Paul turned from the joy in Romans 8 to the sorrow and burden of chapter 9.
2. Paul was filled with joy when he looked at Jesus, but when he looked at his people, he wept.
3. Paul was distressed over the lost.
 - a. He had faced rejection and ill treatment by the Jews, yet he still loved his people.
 - b. He had a deep sense of urgency for them to grasp the truth about Jesus.
 - c. He swore by Christ, his conscience, and the Holy Spirit testifying that he was not lying about his concern for them.
 - 1) "I say the truth in Christ..."
 - 2) "My conscience also bears me witness..."
 - 3) "My conscience bears witness in the Holy Spirit..."
4. Paul lamented over his lost kinsmen, as is clearly seen in the description of his heart.
 - a. "I have great sorrow;" pain, grief, mourning, heaviness, regret
 - b. "I have...unceasing anguish;" intense pain, torment, sorrow, grief. It was continuous and unceasing. Paul was always bearing pain for the salvation of his kinsmen. The depth of Paul's love and concern are graphically evident in what he said and in what he suffered!
5. Paul is the picture of a man who had an unbelievable willingness to be a sacrifice for his people. He could wish to be cursed (Gk: *anathema*) that is, separated from Christ for eternity if it saved his people. He desired to be accursed, cast away, doomed to eternal torment. He was willing to swap his salvation for their doom if it led to their salvation. Paul felt the deepest emotion, love and concern for his people. He was willing to stay out of heaven for the sake of the saved (Philippians 1:22-24), and willing to go to hell for the sake of the lost.
6. Others have followed in Paul's steps demonstrating his great fervor for reaching the lost.

"If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

- C. Cultivate "spiritual" eyes to see those who may or may not realize that they are without hope. Jesus taught his disciples to intentionally look for the lost who were ripe for harvest (open to receive the message of the gospel).

"Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.'"

John 4:34-38

1. Notice first, the spiritual versus the physical concerns.
 - a. The Disciples' concern was for physical nourishment.
 - b. The Disciples lacked awareness of the warfare waged between the physical and spiritual.
 - c. Jesus' submission was to God's will and his work that must be done.
 - d. Jesus' concern was for the hopeless, those lost in sin and shame.
 - e. Jesus was eager to take every opportunity to reach and help the hopeless, even the Samaritans, the outcasts of his time.
 - to bring them to living water
 - to quench their inner thirst
 - to bring them to God and true worship
2. Notice second, that the harvest is ripe.
 - a. Jesus' focus was not on earthly matters; fields of grain or the affairs of this life, but rather on reaching the lost and producing spiritual fruit.
 - b. Jesus' heart was for the needy, hopeless, helpless souls ripe for harvest.
3. Notice third, the task is urgent.

- a. Jesus' saw souls ready today, right now, to be harvested for the kingdom.
 - b. Jesus' was constantly aware of the urgency of harvesting souls today who have been prepared and drawn by the Spirit.
 - The Spirit of God was sent to create a thirst for God among the hopeless (John 6:44).
 - The Spirit of God was sent to convict the hopeless of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-11).
 - The Spirit of God was sent to draw the lost to God through the witness of God's people (Colossians 4:3).
4. Notice fourth, that there are rewards and great benefits in reaching the unredeemed.
- a. You will reap a reward.
 - b. You will be part of something with eternal significance and purpose.
 - c. You will experience the joy of serving God and seeing the hopeless find hope.
 - d. You will reap the benefits of the labor of others, some plant and sow, others reap.

D. Cultivate a deeper understanding of your identity in Christ and how it shapes your life.

1. Understanding that your mission is not just about works you do; it is primarily about WHO YOU ARE in Christ (Matthew 5:13-14).
 - a. You are salt and light.
 - b. You are called to impact our world.
 - You are to be single-minded and focused (Romans 1:14-15).
 - You are to be intentionally and consistently alert to Christ's mission of proclaiming the gospel (Ephesians 6:19-20).
 - You are to be looking for the harvest that is now ripe (John 4:35).
2. Living on mission with others who also understand their identity in Christ helps you focus on outreach, encouragement and commitment.

- a. Meet weekly to study, equip, share and pray as you grow in your calling to reach the hopeless.
 - b. Share and celebrate weekly the results of obedience to reach out to the hopeless.
 - c. Learn and grow from your experiences as you work together.
 - d. Encourage each other in your mission of outreach.
 - e. Brainstorm mission-oriented group activities.
3. Implementing the principles and tools taught in CTM.
- E. Cultivate a heart that rejoices when one comes to Christ. (Luke 15)

1. Like the shepherd when he found the lost sheep

“So he told them this parable: ‘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? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, “Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.””^[Emphasis added]
Luke 15:3-6

2. Like the woman when she found her lost coin

“Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’”^[Emphasis added]
Luke 15:8-9

3. Like the angels of God when one sinner repents

“Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”
Luke 15:10

4. Like the father whose prodigal son repented and returned home

“And he said, ‘There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need.... And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ... the father said to his

servants, "Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.""

[Emphasis added]

Luke 15:11-32