

Stepping Out

FBC's Fall Focus: "Invest"

Week of November 1st, 2009

Fall Focus Update

FBC's SHARE Plan is generating some exciting Kingdom project ideas that are being floated by groups and individuals. Please join with us in praying that God would have His way with our congregation by motivating us, leading us, and equipping us to move out into our communities in His name.

As we continue our Fall Focus we now turn to that which was Jesus' plan to reconcile the world back to Himself. Jesus never organized large evangelistic crusades, though crowds found His teaching so compelling they couldn't get enough of it. Despite His popularity, large crowds were not the essence of Jesus' plan. Neither was political activism. He never wrote a book or earned an honorary doctorate. What He did do was invest Himself in a few good (albeit imperfect) men. Listen to Robert Coleman on the Master's plan.

Jesus devoted most of His remaining life on earth to these few disciples. He literally staked His whole ministry upon them. The world could be indifferent toward Him and still not defeat His strategy. It even caused Him no great concern when His followers on the fringes of things gave up their allegiance when confronted with the true meaning of the Kingdom (John 6:66). But He could not bear to have His close disciples miss His purpose. They had to understand the truth and be sanctified by it (John 17:17), else all would be lost.

Monday – Get Close to Others

"What is a friend? A single soul dwelling in two bodies." Augustine, 4th-5th c. North African Bishop

1. Please read 2 Timothy 1:1-4 and Acts 16:1-5 and list the relationship characteristics you see between Paul and Timothy.
2. See Proverbs 18:24. Would being that close to someone enhance or interfere with your ability to influence them for God? How?
3. Read 1 Samuel 20:1-4, 32-34, 42 and describe the relationship between David and Jonathan. How did Jonathan honor God in this relationship?

Making it Personal: Who is your Timothy? Ask God to show you who you can invest your time and efforts into, so that you can influence them for God.

Tuesday – To Know Another

"The best mirror is an old friend." George Herbert, 17th c. Welsh poet and priest

1. Please read 2 Timothy 1:5-7. How would you describe the relationship portrayed here? What indications are there for how well Paul knew Timothy?
2. Read John 1:43-51. How well did Jesus know Nathanael? How do you think Nathanael felt about this?

Digging Deeper: Read Psalm 139:1-24. How does it make you feel to know that God knows you completely?

Wednesday – Pass it On to Others

"Go and make disciples of all nations." Jesus, Matthew 28:19

1. Please read 2 Timothy 2:1-2. How are personal effort and reliance on God joined together here?
2. Paul continues to address Timothy as his "son" even though they were not related. What does this tell you about the authority – and responsibility – a person can have in relationship with another in God's name?
3. In John 21:15-17, what does Jesus tell Peter to do? In your own words, what is Jesus asking Peter to do?

Making it Personal: What has God done in your life that you think is worth passing on to others?

Thursday – Soldier On For Others

"Perseverance: Steady persistence in a course of action." Dictionary.com

1. Please read 2 Timothy 2:3-7. Which of these analogies do you most identify with: soldier, athlete or farmer? What does each of them say about persevering?
2. According to Hebrews 10:35-39, what results from our perseverance? What does that passage identify as our inspiration to persevere? When have you felt this?
3. Compare 1 Timothy 4:15-16 and Revelation 2:2-3. How does Jesus view our efforts to persevere for him?

Prayer Focus: Pray that God's people would be known for their desire to serve him and others, persevering even through difficulties to reach out to people around them.

Friday – Come Before Winter

"A true friend is tested in adversity." Henry Ellis, 18th c. Colonial Governor of Georgia

1. Please read 2 Timothy 4:9-22 and describe all that was going through Paul's mind.
2. What practical things did Paul ask Timothy to do for him? Why do you think it was so important that Timothy get to Paul before winter (hint: verse 13)?
3. What kind of friend was Thomas in John 11:1-16? Is there anyone you'd risk your life for?

Digging Deeper: In John 11:17-44 Jesus' friends Mary and Martha apparently thought he'd arrived in Judea too late. What does this passage tell you about how God's timing may work out in your own life?

For the Weekend: Read 2 Timothy 4:1-8. How do you see perseverance working out in Paul and Timothy's lives in those passages? How do they exercise that perseverance in their relationship with others?