

| Everyday Missionaries |

“And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

Acts 2:46-47

In the book of Acts, we are met with a church that went about their normal, everyday lives as people who had been changed by Jesus. They shared meals together. They attended the temple together. They served each other and sacrificed to help meet people’s needs. Obviously, they would have also had jobs and family responsibilities. But in the midst of this, we see that many people were regularly coming to faith in Christ. The early church’s understanding of Jesus’ call to “go and make disciples” was to approach every aspect of their lives as if at any moment, in any situation, the Holy Spirit would actively use them to help people come to know the good news of the gospel. Often, we think of the call to make disciples as following in the footsteps of Paul to the Gentiles or Peter to the Jews. But we forget that tens of thousands of the other Christians simply continued living their normal lives with a new understanding of sharing the love of Jesus in everything they did. *This* is what it means to be an everyday missionary.

God may call some of us to the foreign mission field. God may lead others of us to full-time vocational ministry. The majority of the church, though, will continue to live their lives as people who are following Jesus, actively looking to share the gospel and see more people become Christians. Our schedules may not change very much at all. We are *missionaries* in the context of everyday life. Jeff Vanderstelt, a pastor in Washington, puts it this way: “You are the church. Now everything counts.” His point is that every aspect of our lives is now brought under the reign of God. Our lives are not segmented into work, family, hobbies, church, and so forth; all areas of our lives now become opportunities to introduce people to Jesus. In this way, God is reaching many areas in our community that would not be reached by vocational missionaries, but are being reached by his everyday missionaries who get paid to haul trash, build doors, or file taxes.

“I Don’t Have Time for Mission”

Busyness is a typical response when the normal American is faced with putting something else on their already over-filled plate. To be sure, being on mission requires re-prioritizing our schedules to reflect our faith in Jesus. However, the freedom of being an everyday missionary is that it may not be necessary to add anything to your already busy life. You just have to begin to see that every part of your life is now an avenue for God’s mission of redemption on earth. This mindset becomes your new lens for how you view your purpose in the world. It becomes the way you see yourself and every area of your life.

- You no longer just work a job... you make disciples at work. You have a ministry with people in a workplace and happen to get your paycheck from that company.
- You no longer just have hobbies... you spend time doing fun things to build relationships with people far from Christ.

- You no longer just raise a family... you teach your children and spouse about Jesus.

You do the same things you've been doing with a new and compelling purpose because you are a part of God's mission to save the world. It means you are now intentional as you are doing the things you're *already* doing with the people God has put you around. You don't add mission to your life - life is now one big opportunity for discipleship and mission.

Normal Life with Gospel Intentionality

Who needs Jesus? Everyone. When Jesus told his disciples to "go and make disciples," he was personally asking each of his followers to use their lives to help more people become Christians. Each believer had an individual responsibility for sharing the gospel with people whose lives naturally intersected with their own, and the same is true for us. We need to begin seeing all of life for us as a mission field. I've heard some Christians lament before "It's hard to work where I work, because I'm the only one who is a believer." When we say things like this what we're failing to realize is that Christ has already infiltrated that workplace with a missionary. Us. We are surrounded by those who need to know the love of God in Christ. As we trust Jesus to lead people to repentance and faith, we intentionally use our daily activities and ask the question, "who needs Jesus?"

At work, being intentional may mean that instead of eating lunch in your car to rest, you sit in the break room and get to know people better. It could mean that instead of bypassing your coworker who's having a bad day, you ask them how they are feeling and if there are ways you can help. With your neighbors, being intentional might mean that you notice when they are doing yard work and offer to lend a hand. When you go on an early evening walk, try to talk to people that are out doing yardwork or playing with the kids. Invite them to hang out or have dinner so that you can invite them to spend time with your Community Group that meets on Thursday nights just up the street. In your hobbies, don't just look at playing golf once a month as only for your enjoyment. Invite some of your friends, coworkers, or neighbors who don't know Jesus to join you. For college students, it means being intentional with your roommates and classmates, looking for ways to have the gospel intersect with your normal routines. With your family, instead of watching TV together each night, carve out one evening where you read the bible together and pray for the school that your kids go to. Since you are likely going to be eating most dinners together at night, invite the family over that just moved in across the street.

What about the smaller aspects of our lives? When you are eating out at a restaurant, ask the waiter if there is anything you can pray about for him. The cashier at the grocery store may just be waiting on somebody to ask how she is doing and invite her to something fun. As you sit watching your kids JV volleyball match, try to sit near some of the parents that you don't know very well. Be intentional in your study group to get to know people and build friendships. If you play sports, look for opportunities with your teammates to point them towards Jesus.

Being an everyday missionary means realizing that we are surrounded by people who need to know Jesus and approaching each day with intentionality to help them come to an understanding of the gospel. The opportunities are endless.