

Preparing for Missions

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep
to gain that which he cannot lose.”

– Jim Elliot

Based on “Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions”
by John Piper

Lesson 1: God’s Radical God Centeredness

Lesson 2: Worship: The Goal and Fuel of Missions

Lesson 3: Loving Like Christ Loved

Lesson 4: Prayer: The Wartime Walkie-Talkie

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Lesson 7: The Great Commission

Lesson 8: What is the Gospel?

Lesson 9: For Christ and His Kingdom



THE ANCHOR

Preparing for Missions: Evangelism Resources

1. Books
 - a. “Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions” by John Piper
 - b. “Desiring God” by John Piper
 - c. “Mere Christianity” by C.S. Lewis
 - d. “More than a Carpenter” by Josh McDowell
 - e. “Case for Christ” by Lee Strobel
 - f. “Questioning Evangelism” by Randy Newman
 - g. “Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name” by Sally Lloyd Jones
2. Tracts
 - a. “The Story” published by Crossway
 - b. “For Your Joy” published by Desiring God
 - c. Truth Coins
3. Websites
 - a. www.desiringgod.org
 - b. www.outreachmagazine.com
 - c. www.billygraham.org
4. Free Apps for your phone or tablet
 - a. Share Your Faith

Preparing for Missions: God's Radical God Centeredness

Lesson 1

1. God is passionate about His own glory. Look at Isaiah 43:6-7, Isaiah 49:3, Isaiah 48:9-11, Psalm 106:8, 1 Samuel 12:22, Ezekiel 36:22-23, Isaiah 43:25, Psalm 25:11, John 12:27-28, Ephesians 1:4-6, Romans 9:17, and Romans 15:7, 2 Thessalonians 1:9-10. What types of things does God do for his own sake?
2. Consider this statement: "The chief end of God is to glorify God and enjoy Himself forever." Is it controversial? What do you think? How does it make you feel? Is it objectionable? Is it true?
3. God wants...and commands out praise (Psalm 148). Is God's pursuit of glory at our expense? Read Ephesians 1. How is God's commitment to Himself expressed to us?
4. Is God's passion for His own glory inconsistent with 1 Corinthians 13? Why not?
5. "God is most glorified when we are most satisfied in Him." – John Piper. What do you think?

God is righteous. This means that he recognizes, welcomes, loves, and upholds with infinite jealousy and energy what is infinitely valuable, namely, the worth of God. – John Piper

Biblical Text to Show God's Zeal for His Own Glory

God chose His people for His glory.

Ephesians 1:4-6: He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace.

God created us for His glory

Isaiah 43:6-7: I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

God called Israel for His glory.

Jeremiah 13:11: I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to me, declares the Lord, that they might be for me a people, a name, a praise, and a glory.

God rescued Israel from Egypt for His glory.

Psalm 106:7-8: Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wondrous works...but rebelled by the Sea, at the Red Sea. Yet he saved them for his name's sake, that they might make known his mighty power.

God raised Pharaoh at the Red Sea to show His power and glorify His name.

Romans 9:17: For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."

God defeated Pharaoh at the Red Sea to show His glory.

Exodus 14:4: And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.

God spared Israel in the wilderness for the glory of His name.

Ezekiel 20:14: I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out.

God gave Israel victory in Canaan for the glory of His name.

2 Samuel 7:23: And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods?

God did not cast away His people for the glory of His name.

1 Samuel 12:22: For the Lord will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake.

God saved Jerusalem from attack for the glory of His name.

2 Kings 19:34: For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David.

God restored Israel from exile for the glory of His name.

Ezekiel 36:22-23: "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

Jesus sought the glory of His father in all He did.

John 7:18: The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood.

Jesus told us to do good works so that God gets glory.

Matthew 5:16: In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Jesus warned that not seeking God's glory makes faith impossible.

John 5:44: How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?

Jesus said that he answers prayer that God would be glorified.

John 14:13: Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Jesus endured his final hours of suffering for God's glory.

John 12:27-28: "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."

God gave His Son to vindicate the glory of His righteousness.

Romans 3:25: God put forward as propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

God forgives our sins for His own sake.

Isaiah 43:25: I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sin.

Jesus receives us into his fellowship for the glory of God.

Romans 15:7: Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Son of God.

John 16:14: He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

God instructs us to everything for his glory.

1 Corinthians 10:31: So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

God tells us to serve in a way that will glorify Him.

1 Peter 4:11: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Jesus will fill us with fruits of righteousness for God's glory.

Philippians 1:9,11: It is my prayer that...[you be] filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

All are under judgment for dishonoring God.

Romans 1:22-23: They became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images.

Herod is struck dead because he did not give glory to God.

Acts 12:23: Immediately, an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory.

Jesus is coming again for the glory of God.

2 Thessalonians 1:9-10: They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

Jesus ultimate aim for us is that we see and enjoy His glory.

John 17:24: Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

Even in wrath, God's aim is to make known the wealth of His glory.

Romans 9:22-23: What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory.

God's plan is to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory.

Habakkuk 2:14: For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the earth.

Everything that happens will rebound to God's glory.

Romans 11:36: From Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen.

In the New Jerusalem, the glory of God replaces the sun.

Revelation 21:23: And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

Preparing for Missions: Worship - The Goal and Fuel of Missions

Lesson 2

1. Read Romans 1:20-21. What does Paul say about the absence of worship?
2. Read the quote from John Piper. What do you think? Is it true?

Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exist because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is temporary. But worship abides forever. Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions...Where passion for God is weak, zeal for missions will be weak. – John Piper

3. What is worship in its broadest sense? Read Matthew 15:8-9, John 4:23, and Matthew 5:16. What does it mean to be caught up in worship? Read Matthew 13:44-46. Are there other scriptural illustrations about worship?
4. Worship must be the goal and the fuel that drive us in missions because it is goal and the fuel that drives God in missions. What are some examples of how worship leads to missions? Start by reading Psalm 96:3, Isaiah 12:4, Matthew 6:9-10, Matthew 19:29, Acts 21:13, Romans 1:5, Philippians 2:9-11, and 3 John 6-7.
5. What should we do when we aren't as passionate about God's glory as we should be?

When the glory of God Himself saturates our preaching and teaching and conversation and writings and when he predominates above our talk of methods and strategies and psychological buzzwords and cultural trends, then the people might begin to feel that he is the central reality of their lives and that the spread of His glory is more important than all possessions and all their plans . – John Piper

Preparing for Missions: Loving Like Christ Loved (1 John 4:7-8)

Lesson 3

1. What are some worldly definitions of love? Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. Compare these statements to what Christ said in John 15:13. How could we reconcile the differences in these passages?

2. Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-4, 10. The Macedonians gave away their possessions and it was counted as love. What things characterized their lives that made their generosity loving instead of worthless?
 - a. 2 Corinthians 8:1:
 - b. 2 Corinthians 8:2:
 - c. 2 Corinthians 8:3-4, 2 Corinthians 9:7:

3. Read the rest of 1 Corinthians 13. What is love? Which characteristics are emotions and which ones are actions? How should that impact our definition of love?

4. Love is eager to do ministry (1 Peter 5:1-2). How else does love relate to missions?
 - a. Hebrews 10:32-35
 - b. Luke 10:2, Matthew 9:37
 - c. 2 Peter 3:9
 - d. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23
 - e. Luke 15:1-10
 - f. Luke 15:11-32

5. We all need to love our neighbor better. How can we do that?
 - a. Read Luke 12:33 and Acts 20:35. What do we need to remember?
 - b. Read Romans 10:1-3. What sparked Paul's sympathy and compassion?

Love is the overflow of joy—*in God!* It is not duty for duty's sake or right for right's sake. It is not a resolute abandoning of one's own good with a view solely to the good of the other person. It is first a deeply satisfying experience of the fullness of God's grace, and then a doubly satisfying experience of sharing that grace with another person. – John Piper

Preparing for Missions: Prayer -The Wartime Walkie-Talkie

Lesson 4

1. What are some metaphors used by the Bible to describe life on earth? Read 1 Timothy 6:12, 2 Timothy 4:7, 1 Corinthians 9:26-27, and 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. Why does Paul use war as a metaphor for life? What are we fighting?
2. Read Ephesians 6:10-18. What tools are we given for offense and defense? How does prayer fit in?
3. **SPOILER ALERT!!!!** Who wins the war? Read Psalm 86:9, Isaiah 55:10-11, Matthew 16:18, and Matthew 24:14. How should this affect our prayer life?
4. How does prayer relate to the work of missions? Read Romans 10:13-17 and Acts 4:31. Also read 2 Thessalonians 3:1, Ephesians 6:18-20, Colossians 4:3, and 2 Corinthians 1:10-11. Is prayer the work of missions or is it the power behind the work of missions?
5. Why else does God say that prayer is important? Read Psalm 50:15, John 14:13, and John 16:24.

Life is a war. That's not all it is. But it is always that. Our weakness in prayer is owing largely to our neglect of this truth. Prayer is primarily a wartime walkie-talkie for the mission of the church as it advances against the powers of darkness and unbelief. It is not surprising that prayer malfunctions when we try to make it a domestic intercom to call upstairs for more comforts in the den. God has given us prayer as a wartime walkie-talkie so that we can call headquarters for everything we need as the kingdom of God advances in the world. Prayer gives us the significance of frontline forces and gives God the glory of a limitless provider. The one who gives the power gets the glory. Thus, prayer safeguards the supremacy of God in missions while lining us with endless grace for every need. – John Piper

Not only has God made the accomplishment of His purposes hang on the preaching of His word, but He has also made the success of that preaching hang on prayer. God's goal to be glorified will not succeed without the powerful proclamation of the gospel. And that gospel will not be proclaimed in power to all the nations without the prevailing, earnest, faith-filled prayers of God's people. – John Piper

What did Jesus and the early church pray about?

They called on God to exalt His name in the world.

Matthew 6:9: Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name.

They called on God to extend His kingdom in the world.

Matthew 6:10: Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

They called on God that the gospel would speed ahead and be honored.

2 Thessalonians 3:1: Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored.

They called on God for the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 11:13: If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

They called on God to vindicate His people in their cause.

Luke 18:7: And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them?

They called on God to save unbelievers.

Romans 10:1: Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.

They called on God to direct the use of the sword.

Ephesians 6:17-18: Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

They called on God for boldness in proclamation.

Ephesians 6:18-19: To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel...

They called on God for signs and wonders.

Acts 4:29-30: And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.

They called on God for the healing of wounded comrades.

James 5:14-15: Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up.

They called on God for the healing of unbelievers.

It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him healed him.

They called on God for the casting out of demons.

Mark 9:29: And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

They called on God for miraculous deliverances.

Acts 12:5: So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

They called on God for the raising of the dead.

Acts 9:40: But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up.

They called on God to supply his troops with necessities.

Matthew 6:11: Give us this day our daily bread.

They called on God for strategic wisdom.

James 1:5: If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

They called on God to establish leadership in the outposts.

Acts 14:23: And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

They called on God to send out reinforcements.

Matthew 9:38: Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

They called on God for the success of their missionaries.

Romans 15:30-31: I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints...

They called on God for unity and harmony in the ranks.

John 17:20-21: "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

They called on God for the encouragement of togetherness.

1 Thessalonians 3:10: ...as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith.

They called on God for a mind of discernment.

Philippians 1:9: And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment...

They called on God for knowledge of His will.

Colossians 1:9: And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding...

They called on God to know Him better.

Ephesians 1:16-17: I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him...

They called on God for power to comprehend the love of Christ.

Ephesians 3:14, 18-19: For this reason I bow my knees before the Father...may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

They called on God for a deeper sense of assured hope.

Ephesians 1:16, 18: I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers...that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints...

They called on God for strength and endurance.

Ephesians 3:14, 16: For this reason I bow my knees before the Father...he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being.

They called on God for a deeper sense of His power within them.

Ephesians 1:16, 18-19: I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers...having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe...

They called on God that their faith not be destroyed.

Luke 22:32: but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.

They called on God for greater faith.

Mark 9:24: Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"

They called on God that they might not fall into temptation.

Matthew 6:13: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

They called on God that He would complete their resolves.

2 Thessalonians 1:11: To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

They called on God that they would do good works.

Colossians 1:10: And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

They called on God for forgiveness of their sins.

Matthew 6:12: and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors...

They called on God for protection from the evil one.

Matthew 6:13: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Preparing for Missions: Suffering - The Sovereignty of God and the Cost of Missions

Lesson 5

1. What type of suffering does God “count?” Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, 12:8, Philippians 2:25-30.

All experiences of suffering in the path of Christian obedience, whether from persecution or sickness or accident, have this in common: They all threaten our faith in the goodness of God and tempt us to leave the path of obedience. Therefore, every triumph of faith and all perseverance in obedience are testimonies to the goodness of God and the preciousness of Christ—whether the enemy is sickness, Satan, sin, or sabotage....Therefore, all suffering, of every kind, that we endure in the path of our Christian calling is a suffering “with Christ” and “for Christ.” – John Piper

2. What is God’s relationship to suffering? Does He “permit” suffering or does he have complete control over suffering?
 - a. Isaiah 46:8-11:
 - b. Job 1-2:
 - c. Acts 2:22-24:
 - d. Isaiah 53:10:
3. What is the Christian’s relationship to suffering?
 - a. John 15:20:
 - b. Matthew 10:16, Luke 11:49:
 - c. 1 Peter 2:20-23, 3:8-9:
 - d. 1 Peter 4:1:
 - e. 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5:
 - f. Revelation 6:10-11:
4. God is not a harsh taskmaster. God comforts us in our suffering.
 - a. Isaiah 40:31:
 - b. Isaiah 43:19-21:
 - c. Isaiah 44:8:

- d. Isaiah 46:3-4:
 - e. Isaiah 49:14-16:
 - f. Isaiah 63:9:
 - g. Romans 8:35-39:
 - h. Hebrews 4:15-16:
5. How should the Christian respond? (Philippians 1:29; Colossians 1:24) Why?
(Incidentally...this is how we prepare ourselves for future suffering.)
- a. Philippians 3:8-10:
 - b. Matthew 5:11-12:.
 - c. Hebrews 10:32-34:
 - d. Romans 5:3-5:
 - e. 1 Peter 4:13-14:
 - f. 1 Thessalonians 3:6-10:
 - g. Romans 8:18:
6. Take courage and read Romans 8:35-39.

We measure the worth of a hidden treasure by what we will gladly sell to buy it. If we will sell all, then we measure the worse as supreme. If we will not, what we have is treasured more. "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he does and sells all that he has and buys that field" (Matthew 13:44). The extent of his sacrifice and the depth of his joy display the worth he puts on the treasure of God, show the supremacy of God's worth more clearly in the world than all worship and prayer." – John Piper

The Story of Joseph (A Masai Warrior) – Documented by Michael Card

One day Joseph, who was walking along one of these hot, dirty African roads, met someone who shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with him. Then and there he accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior. The power of the Spirit began transforming his life; he was filled with such excitement and joy that the first thing he wanted to do was return to his own village and share that same Good News with the members of his local tribe.

Joseph began going from door-to-door, telling everyone he met about the Cross [suffering!] of Jesus and the salvation it offered, expecting to see their faces light up the way his had. To his amazement the villagers not only didn't care, they became violent. The men of the village seized him and held him to the ground while the women beat him with strands of barbed wire. He was dragged from the village and left to die alone in the bush.

Joseph somehow managed to crawl to a water hole, and there, after days of passing in and out of consciousness, found the strength to get up. He wondered about the hostile reception he had received from people he had known all his life. He decided he must have left something out or told the story of Jesus incorrectly. After rehearsing the message he had first heard, he decided to go back and share his faith once more.

Joseph limped into the circle of huts and began to proclaim Jesus. "He died for you, so that you might find forgiveness and come to know the living God" he pleaded. Again he was grabbed by the men of the village and held while the women beat him reopening wounds that had just begun to heal. Once more they dragged him unconscious from the village and left him to die.

To have survived the first beating was truly remarkable. To live through the second was a miracle. Again, days later, Joseph awoke in the wilderness, bruised, scarred—and determined to go back.

He returned to the small village and this time, they attacked him before he had a chance to open his mouth. As they flogged him for the third and probably the last time, he again spoke to them of Jesus Christ, the Lord. Before he passed out, the last thing he saw was that the women who were beating him began to weep.

This time he awoke in his own bed. The ones who had so severely beaten him were now trying to save his life and nurse him back to health. The entire village had come to Christ.

Preparing for Missions: Suffering: The Cost of Missions...Part 2

Lesson 6

1. Last week, we ended with Colossians 1:24. What does it mean to fill up Christ's sufferings?
2. Why does God **appoint** suffering for His servants? How is this reconciled with Romans 8:28?
 - a. Colossians 1:24:
 - b. 2 Corinthians 1:8-9:
 - c. Matthew 5:11-12, 2 Corinthians 4:17-18:
 - d. Philippians 1:14:
 - e. Luke 21:12-13:
 - f. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, Philippians 3:7-8:
3. How do we apply something like this?

The suffering of the servants of God, borne with faith and even praise, is a shattering experience to apathetic saints whose lives are empty in the midst of countless comforts. – John Piper

Sergei Kourdakov's autobiography, *The Persecutor*

I saw Victor Matveyev reach and grab for a young girl [Natasha Zhdanova] who was trying to escape to another room. She was a beautiful young girl. What a waste to be a Believer. Victor caught her, picked her above his head, and held her high in the air for a second. She was pleading, "Don't, please don't. Dear God, help us!" Victor threw her so hard she hit the wall at the same height she was thrown, then dropped to the floor, semiconscious, moaning. Victor turned and laughed and exclaimed, "I'll bet the idea of God went flying out of her head."

On a later raid, Sergei was shocked to see Natasha again.

I quickly surveyed the room and saw a sight I couldn't believe! There she was, the same girl! It couldn't be. But it was. Only three nights before, she had been at the other meeting and had been viciously thrown across the room. It was the first time I really got a good look at her. She was more beautiful than I had first remembered—a very beautiful girl with long, flowing, blond hair, large blue eyes, and smooth skin, one of the most naturally beautiful girls I have ever seen.... I picked her up and flung her on a table facedown. Two of us stripped her clothes off. One of my men held her down and I began to beat her again and again. My hands began to sting under the blows. Her skin started to blister. I continued to beat her, until pieces of bloody flesh came off on my hand. She moaned but fought desperately not to cry. To suppress her cries, she bit her lower lip until it was bitten through and blood ran down her chin. At last she gave in and began sobbing. When I was so exhausted I couldn't raise my arm for even one more blow, and her backside was a mass of raw flesh, I pushed her off the table, and she collapsed on the floor.

To Sergei's shock, he later encountered her at yet another prayer meeting.

There she was again—Natasha Zhdanova! Several of the guys saw her too. Alex Gulyaev moved toward Natasha, hatred filling his face, his club raised above his head. Then something I never expected to see suddenly happened. Without warning, Victor jumped between Natasha and Alex, facing Alex head-on. "Get out of my way," Alex shouted angrily. Victor's feet didn't move. He raised his club and said menacingly, "Alex, I'm telling you, don't touch her! No one touches her!" I listened in amazement. Incredibly, one of my most brutal men was protecting one of the Believers! "Get back!" he shouted to Alex. "Get back or I'll let you have it." He shielded Natasha, who was cowering on the floor. Angered, Alex shouted, "You want her for yourself, don't you?" "No," Victor shouted back. "She has something we don't have!"

...For one of the first times in my life, I was deeply moved...Natasha did have something! She had been beaten horribly. She had been warned and threatened. She had gone through unbelievable suffering, but here she was again. Even Victor had been moved and recognized it. She had something we didn't have. I wanted to run after her and ask, "What is it?" I wanted to talk to her, but she was gone. This heroic Christian girl who had suffered so much at our hands somehow touched and troubled me very much.

The Lord later opened Sergei's heart to the glorious good news of Jesus Christ. As he later reflected on Natasha, whom he never saw again, he wrote:

And, finally, to Natasha, whom I beat terribly and who was willing to be beaten a third time for her faith, I want to say, Natasha, largely because of you, my life is now changed and I am a fellow Believer in Christ with you. I have a new life before me. God has forgiven me; I hope you can also. Thank you, Natasha, wherever you are. I will never, never forget you.

Preparing for Missions: The Great Commission

Lesson 7

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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 28:18-20

1. What is the mission of the church? Read the quotations from John Piper. The primary mission of the church is worship...not missions. Worship is the fuel and the goal of missions....not the other way around.

Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exist because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is temporary. But worship abides forever. – John Piper

2. What is so “great” about the Great Commission?
 - a. It has a “great” _____.
 - b. It has a “great” _____.
 - c. It has a “great” _____.
 - d. It has a “great” _____.
 - e. It is based on a “great” _____.
3. “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” Jesus has authority...
 - a. To give us _____ (John 1:12-13)
 - b. To give _____. (John 5:21)
 - c. To _____ (John 5:22, 27; Revelation 1:17-18)
 - d. To _____ (John 12:27-28)
 - e. To make us _____ (John 15:16)
 - f. To _____ (Colossians 1:16-20)
 - g. To _____ (Matthew 16:18-19)

The church's commission is indeed directed by a purpose, but it is driven by a promise.
-Michael Horton

4. “Go, therefore”....To the nations.
 - a. But first..._____! (Acts 1:4-8)
 - b. Definition of the “nations:” Revelation 7:9-10, Matthew 24:14

5. “Make Disciples”: It seems so simple!!! Where is the flare? We can’t replace the gospel with style points.
 - a. Proclaim the message.
 - b. Baptize.
 - c. Teach everything (and LEARN).

6. “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age”

7. Food for thought....Why is this so hard? The gospel demands our life. (Matt 16:24-25)
 - a. Does the gospel message leave me so unmoved that I don’t care?
 - b. Do I have a narcissistic (“It is all about ME.”) gospel?
 - c. Am I more interested in arguing about theological nuances, music preferences, preaching styles, parking arrangements, etc....than I am about carrying out the mission?
 - d. Is there something that is weighing me down? Laziness? A commitment to my own comfort? Fear? Misplaced treasure? Idolatry? Love of money?
 - e. Is there something I can do to be more missions-minded?

And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.
 – Hebrews 11:32-40 and 12: 1-3.

Preparing for Missions: What is the Gospel?

Lesson 8

1. What is humanity's core problem (Romans 1:18-23)? What is at stake? Read Matthew 18:8-9, Matthew 25:46, and Mark 9:43-48. How is hell described in the Bible?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. What are some general characteristics about the gospel?
3. What is the gospel? Read "The Story" from Crossway Publishers. What are the key components that **MUST** be shared in order to accurately represent the gospel? What are some key verses?
4. Read Mark 12:28-34. Why did Jesus say that he was close to the kingdom? What was good about him? When is "close" not "close enough?" What was he missing?
5. Have you heard the phrase "Preach the gospel...and use words if necessary." What does it mean? What is helpful about this statement? What is missing or inaccurate?

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" – Romans 10:13-15

Preparing for Missions: For Christ and His Kingdom

Lesson 9

1. Worship is the fuel and the goal of missions.
 - a. Worship gives birth to missions (Isaiah 6, Acts 13:2-3).
 - b. Worship naturally leads to missions because we naturally praise what we love (Psalm 96, Isaiah 12:4-6).
 - c. Worship helps us recognize our dependence on Him (Isaiah 64:4, Acts 17:25).
 - d. Worship makes us willing to suffer for the cause of Christ (Matthew 19:29, Acts 21:13).
 - e. Worship helps us to keep things in perspective (Matthew 13)
 - f. Worship is the GOAL (Revelation 7:9-12)

Worship is essentially an inner stirring of the heart to treasure God above all treasures of the world – a valuing of God above all else that is valuable, a loving of God above all else that is lovely, a savoring of God above all else that is sweet, an admiring of God above all else that is admirable, a fearing of God above all else that is fearful, a respecting of God above all else that is respectable, [and] a prizing of God above all else that is precious.
– John Piper

2. Worship does not exist in a vacuum. It is expressed in our love for other people (1 John 4:8). Love leads to compassion (Romans 10:1-3). Love is willing to suffer (Hebrews 10:32-34)...and rejoices despite suffering.

Love is the overflow of joy—in God! It is not duty for duty's sake or right for right's sake. It is not a resolute abandoning of one's own good with a view solely to the good of the other person. It is first a deeply satisfying experience of the fullness of God's grace, and then a doubly satisfying experience of sharing that grace with another person. – John Piper

3. We are at war...and God has given us a mission. We have the necessary tools (Ephesians 6:11-20). We have immediate access to the commander through prayer and we are ready for combat. NOW is the time for salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2).
4. His mission for us is a CO-mission. We join God in His mission, not vice versa. God does the work and is responsible for the results. We are responsible to be faithful heralds to the world. (Matthew 28:18-20)

5. Life is a war and it sometimes looks like the battle is lost. However, victory is assured (Matthew 16:18, and Matthew 24:14).
6. Lastly, we need to ask ourselves... “Is it worth it?” Following Jesus is costly (1 Corinthians 15:19). Following Jesus leads to suffering. Following Jesus **will** cost us our lives (Matthew 16:25). But...
 - a. Philippians 3:8-10:
 - b. Matthew 5:11-12:
 - c. Matthew 6:19-21:
 - d. Hebrews 10:32-34:
 - e. Mark 10:29-30:
 - f. Romans 8:18:

For my own part, I have never ceased to rejoice that God has appointed me to such an office. People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa...Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter? Away with the word in such a view, and with such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger, now and then, with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life, may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver, and the soul to sink; but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall be revealed in and for us. *I never made a sacrifice.* – David Livingstone

I climbed into the tree and was left there alone in the bush. The hours I spent there live all before me as if it were but of yesterday. I heard the frequent discharging of muskets, and the yells of the Savages. Yet I sat there among the branches, as safe in the arms of Jesus. Never, in all my sorrows, did my Lord draw nearer to me, and speak more soothingly in my soul, than when the moonlight flickered among these chestnut leaves, and the night air played on my throbbing brow, as I told all my heart to Jesus. Alone, yet not alone! If it be to glorify my God, I will not grudge to spend many nights alone in such a tree, to feel again my Savior’s spiritual presence, to enjoy His consoling fellowship. If thus thrown back upon your own soul, alone, all alone, in the midnight, in the bush, in the very embrace of death itself, have you a Friend that will not fail you then? – John Paton, Missionary to Vanuatu while hiding from hostile natives.

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep
to gain that which he cannot lose.”

– Jim Elliot

Give Thanks to God on High

Verse 1

Give thanks to God on high
For saints of other days,
Whose hope it was to live and die
In love's consuming blaze,
For Christ and his kingdom,
His glory and his praise.
For Christ and his kingdom,
His glory and his praise.

Verse 2

Their vision long fulfilled,
Our prayer is still the same:
Upon their work of faith to build,
Their word of truth proclaim,
For Christ and his kingdom,
And for his holy Name.
For Christ and his kingdom,
And for his holy Name.

Verse 3

New tasks today are ours
Who serve a world in pain,
New calls to challenge all our pow'rs
Of heart and hand and brain,
For Christ and his kingdom,
While life and breath remain.
For Christ and his kingdom,
While life and breath remain.

Verse 4

Give thanks to God on high
For all the future sends,
In praise of Christ to live and die
Who calls his servants friends,
For Christ and his kingdom,
whose glory never ends.