



The Master's
PLAN

**A one-year journey to become a disciple
that makes other disciples**

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INTRODUCTION TO 201 GROWING DEEPER!

Have you ever heard the expression “Relationship is hard work”? As human beings we were created for relationships. Relationships with each other and, first and foremost, a relationship with God. In the first module of the Master’s Plan, 101 Kingdom Identity, we deep dived into the issue of **identity**. This answers the question “WHO AM I?” But we did more than just that. In the first lessons we thought about what the Gospel or Good News is all about. I encourage you to have a look again at lessons 1-3 of Kingdom Identity to refresh the information a bit.

The Good News is the answer from God to the Bad News that affected us in three major ways. First, our identity through sin and the fall of Adam and Eve, was hijacked. Instead of being children of God, we lost our God-given identity and in fact became sinners with an inclination to sin continually. Shame entered and branded us as ‘wrong in our inner being’.

Second, one of the first effects of the Fall was that humans experienced also guilt which basically says that we ‘have done something wrong’. We violated a relationship based on love and trust because of disobedience.

Third, God designed us human beings to rule together with Him in His creation. He delegated His power and authority to do that, but again, due to the Fall, this authority was forfeited.

One act of disobedience had tremendous consequences on so many levels. The Fall was really “Bad News” for us all. Yet, the story doesn’t finish there. Thank God! The Good News is that in Jesus Christ we have an answer to all three big problems that have affected us.

In Christ, we are made right with God through what He did. He has forgiven us and now God sees us as right through Christ ‘work on the cross. That’s why we can have a RELATIONSHIP with God again. It’s a love relationship based on grace.

In Christ, our identity as sinner is replaced by His righteous identity. It is the greatest exchange we could possibly make in our lives. Yet, God does not impose this identity upon us. It needs to be received by faith, because it is only by faith that God’s grace starts to take effect in our lives. We also call this to be “IN CHRIST”. Only when we repent (rethink our way of life and change our course in life) from sin and turn to God, will we experience the blessed presence of being in Christ and finding our true, God-given identity purpose and fulfilment in Him alone.

Finally, with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, He has overcome sin and death. The legal authority is already in the hands of our Saviour. Yet, the mission to share this authority with God’s children remains the same. Jesus ‘message was about the Kingdom of God, which is His rule over all and in all. We get to co-operate with that Kingdom Rule. That’s our purpose and destiny as human beings.

To put it in a simple image... The Gospel of God is multifaceted, and it reverses all the Bad News of a Lost relationship, a distorted identity and a forfeited authority. In ‘201 Growing Deeper! ‘we’ll explore the relational aspect of the good news. It’s one thing to know who you are in Christ. That’s a great start. As a matter of fact, that’s where it begins. But then what? How do we grow as Christians? There might even be a holy discontent with the status quo. We want more from God and experience Him more. We desire to have a greater impact upon the people around us that perhaps don’t know Him yet.

It's in the relational part where many Christians struggle. For some reason they KNOW that they are saved, but they don't necessarily EXPERIENCE the love, peace, joy and all the other fruits of the Holy Spirit that characterizes the new life, at least not in the fulness of it. In 201 Growing Deeper the central question builds on the identity question (Who am I?) in the sense that we build a relationship with God while we rest in Him, because our identity is secure. The central question is therefore: "WHOSE AM I?" We'll deep dive into what it means to have and develop a relationship with God.

201 Growing Deeper is a bit different in nature. Together we will watch some short videos together in some of the lessons. The basic outline of a class still flows in a similar way. You can easily remember it by the acronym STREAMS which stands for STORY, TRUTH, ENGAGE, APPLY, MISSION AND STUDY. In the lessons there will be a time for some hands-on exercises in big group and small group settings. Remember, it's not just about the information, but also about formation and transformation. We can only learn by doing. James wrote: "Don't be just hearers of the word, but also doers" (James 1:22).

Ready for the next phase in the journey of the Master's Plan?

Let's go!

LESSON 1 COME IN PLEASE!

Story

Introduction

Let me ask you a question: Do you DESIRE more of God in your life?

It's a strange word to use here, isn't it? *Desire...*

Ruth Haley Barton wrote the following about that:

"The spiritual life begins with the willingness to name our desire in Jesus 'presence. Your desire for God and your capacity to reach for more of God than you have right now is the deepest essence of who you are. It is one of the most powerful motivators for a life lived with intentionality and focus."

Let's watch the first segment of "Sacred Rhythms". It's titled "Longing for more" [3m 29s – 5m 30s]

It starts with your Story...

We desire for God, but God first desires for us. Everything initiates with God. The desire to want God is so important for us to connect with. It shows that the Holy Spirit is already at work in us as He is drawing us closer to Himself.

QUESTION for self-reflection

When was the last time you recall you 'desired more'? More from God? A life that is more in tune with how you really want to live?

Truth

The Story of Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52)

First, read the bible passage. Make notes if you'd like to...

Second, watch the video clip [5m 30 – 13m 52s]

POINT #1 Longing for change must be radical of heart, not perfect in plan.

POINT #2 God longs for us before we even longed more for or from Him.

POINT #3 God wants us to be in touch with our spiritual desires and longings before He changes anything.

Engage (Group discussion)

1. Do you recall a moment in your life when you 'knew that you knew' that you needed God to intervene or do something radical in your life like in the story of Bartimaeus?
2. What desire or longing are you most conscious about in your daily walk now?
3. Go back to the story of Bartimaeus in your bible. This beautiful story has different parts (crying out for Jesus, leaving behind the cloak, saying what you would like Jesus to do for you, a new way of life etc.). Which part or element of this story can you relate to the most? Why? What desire do you have for God to do in your life? Where do you perhaps experience struggle or even resistance in naming what you just know that needs an overhaul or change?

Apply (in trios)

Imagine you are Bartimaeus in the story. It's always very powerful to visualize stories as if you are part of what is happening. Take some time to recap the story in your imagination.

- ✓ Imagine you are sitting on the road...
- ✓ Imagine you have no money and that you are limited in what you can do...
- ✓ Imagine the crowd that is completely ignoring you...
- ✓ Imagine the crowd yelling for Jesus Christ...
- ✓ Imagine you crying out to Jesus...
- ✓ Imagine Jesus calling you out of the crowd to come forward...
- ✓ Imagine you throwing of your cloak and coming to the Master
- ✓ Imagine Jesus asking you the same question: "What is it that you want Me to do for you?"
- ✓ Imagine, imagine, imagine...

Now debrief in your trio what you experienced while you did this small exercise. Remember, first attempts may come difficult, but it is helpful to become more aware of what we are truly desiring from God. God's desire for us is that we long for Him wholeheartedly.

Mission

Jesus came to earth with a clear mission; to seek and save that which was lost. In our desire for a closer, more intimate relationship, the end goal is that the overflow and abundance of our transformed lives (as imperfect as that still may be) starts to affect others around us too.

Yet, we live in a world that needs to see a model or reference they can recognize, understand (to a degree) and eventually long for. In the Mission part we will go through a tool that will help you in engaging with people around you in simple ways. It is part of a strategy called B.L.E.S.S. This tool is not my invention, because it was developed by other people, but the practices are found in how Jesus approached His mission. Let's watch the video clip now to get the broader perspective of what B.L.E.S.S. is about. In the following weeks we will go through each aspect of B.L.E.S.S. The idea is that it will become part of your daily/weekly routine.

[WATCH 'five ways to bless your 'neighbour' 'by pastor Dave Ferguson] [BLESS YOUR NEIGHBOUR](#)

God's desire was always to bless the whole earth, but He uses people to do that. In the very beginning of the Bible we read of a man named Abraham. It was through his offspring that all nations would be blessed. We know that eventually through Abraham's lineage the Messiah Jesus Christ would be born. He is always our ultimate model for life. Jesus shows us what it means to be truly human. He also left us with His legacy to make other followers of Him. Throughout the second course "Growing Deeper", we'd like to reflect upon what it means to be part of His Mission using simple, yet very profound practices. They are first and foremost rooted in a deep relationship with God from which everything else flows.

Study

Go back again to the story of Bartimaeus in **Matthew 10:46-52**.

I am going to guide you through three basic, but very, very important steps in studying the Bible for yourself.

Bible Study starts with a godly curiosity to understand more and wanting to be transformed by the word. A very good way of studying a passage like the Bartimaeus story is to *constantly ask yourself questions*. You may not always find the answer, but sometimes you will discover new things or have a fresh insight of what the story means for you personally. It's that "aha!" moment of growing deeper into God's Word that is very rewarding.

STEP 1 – OBSERVATION

You may want to ask more questions that are *observational* in nature such as:

What could you look for in this stage?

- ✓ Key words or terms that seem to be important;
- ✓ A specific verse that seems to have an emphasis for the author;
- ✓ Repetition of words;
- ✓ Connections of ideas (look at cause and effect, if and then structures, comparisons and contrasts etc.)

Now start asking the basic **WHO, WHERE, WHAT, WHEN** questions

1. Where did this story take place?
2. Who were at the scene?
3. When did this story take place in Jesus life?
4. What are the main characters in the story doing?

You are simply gathering more information. But remember. Stories are never meant 'just for the brains'. Eventually they need to sink in and reach also our hearts. That brings us to a second stage of studying the Bible.

STEP 2 – INTERPRETATION

In step 2 you are trying to discover the meaning of the passage. Now you may want to ask more questions that are *interpretational* in nature such as:

1. Why did the crowd want to silence Bartimaeus? How did they perceive him?
2. Why would Jesus single out Bartimaeus for healing? What made him so 'special'?
3. How would the others have felt that it was Bartimaeus received the healing whereas there were probably many others that were sick as well in the crowd?

Observation and Interpretation are two important steps. Now let's drive it home as we apply the story to our lives. The Bible is meant for our lives to be transformed.

STEP 3 - APPLICATION

Now you may want to ask more questions that are practical (focused on personal application)

1. How does the truth revealed in this story affect my relationship with God?
2. And with others?
3. How does the truth discovered in this story affect my life?

Remember to start with step one. There are no short-cuts in this process. Allow the text to speak for itself before you start reading 'your ideas' into it. Allow the context of the book to give you a better understanding of the passage that you are studying. Context is always king!

Try it now yourself! Write down any question related to the three steps and do your own research...

STEP 1 OBSERVATION:

STEP 2 INTERPRETATION:

STEP 3 APPLICATION: