

Introduction

This is what "Advance" is going to be about. It's going to be about us taking the Gospel and applying it by finding another person that we can mentor, that we can pour into. This is the heart of what "Advance" is really going to be all about. As we jump into this series, I want to invite you to be part of this with us. I want you to begin praying and asking the Lord now, "Lord, is it possible that You might want to use me to pour into one other person?" or if you say, "I'm not ready for that, Lord; would it be time for me to receive from somebody else?" We're going to look at the Book of 1 Thessalonians together, and I believe that is God's blueprint for discipleship through the Apostle Paul. So if you have your Bible, let's open it up; let's jump into 1 Thessalonians together. We're going to begin this series "Advance" together as we look at ways that the Kingdom of God can truly advance. I'm going to pray over us and our time together, and then we're going to jump right into this. Let's pray.

"God, we believe that You want Your Kingdom to move forward and, Lord, that You want to do powerful, supernatural, mighty things through Your Church. Lord, I pray today that the words that I speak would be straight from You and, Lord, that You would impact our hearts and that we would change our behavior, not because of a great sermon but because of the Word of God that moved us, through the Holy Spirit. So Lord, I pray this and I ask it in the Name of Your Son Jesus Christ. Amen."

I'm going to start a little differently today. I'm just going to be really real for a few minutes, if that's alright with you. I think that over the last 22 months I've been praying a lot, asking the Lord, "What do You want to do in our church?" I know I'm an optimist. Those of you who are friends with me, you already know this about me. I'm that positive, upbeat guy. If I was a girl, I would dot my "i"s with little hearts. I'm that guy. (Laughter) I don't, okay... just for the record. (Laughter) It would be hand grenades or something like that... whatever is manly. What I was going to tell you was that, in spite of that, I truly believe, as I've been spending time in prayer, seeking the Lord... I truly believe that God wants to do something unique and supernatural through this body of believers. I can give you a lot of reasons why I think that, but I simply can just sum it up by saying, in time in prayer and in the Word, I really believe that God wants to do something unique in this season through this body. So the reason that I shared that is because, as I've been praying and seeking the Lord in that, I've begun to realize that there's this verse at the end of 1 Thessalonians that really scares me. It says, "*Do not quench the Spirit.*" I think, "How could the Spirit of God be quenched?" And you know what? I realize, when it comes to Houston Northwest, the person who has the greatest ability to quench the Holy Spirit in this place is me. I've been thinking, "Lord, what would it look like if I quenched the Holy Spirit?" I believe that God has really shown me the thing that I have to avoid, so I just want to share that with you. I believe that God wants me, as a pastor, and I think really all pastors, to avoid one key thing, one key temptation, and it is the temptation to control this church. I think that's a pretty common temptation that pastors face, particularly in the West, particularly in the United States because we live in a world that is very concerned with image and wants things to look a certain way and to run a certain way, and the idea of control is very, very, very appealing. It's pretty natural because when you look at the scriptural office of elder or overseer or pastor... whatever word you want to put on it in the New Testament... the shepherding task of the pastor is to oversee things like finances, conflict resolution, counsel with people whenever they are having difficult issues, and all that kind of stuff... which is all fantastic... but what's funny is that if you're not careful, subtly, I believe in the position of pastor, you can begin to believe, "I'm kind of the one running this thing." That is not the case. It's God the Father, through Jesus Christ, the Head of this church that has appointed someone to be a chief shepherd here but an under-shepherd to the Lord. I bring that up because... for those of you who don't know... I've shared this before but I keep my prayer list, and one of the things at the top of my prayer list is... and I pray this every

time I go through my prayer list is, "Lord, this is not my church; this is Your Church." I pray that and just have to verbally say it out loud to remind myself that the Lord is in control here. You're like, "Man... are you a freak? What's wrong with you? Why are you saying all this?" The reason that I'm telling you this is that I believe that I need to just tell you that because if I release control it means that someone is going to have control. Who is that? I believe it needs to be the Holy Spirit of the Lord. So if the Holy Spirit of the Lord is going to be in control, what does that look like? That's kind of what I want us to begin to talk about a little bit today. It's that if we release control, what would absolutely happen? When I go back and I read the New Testament, do you know what I see? I see that whenever Jesus preached, this interesting word shows up a lot. You'll read in the Gospels, "The people were amazed at His teaching, because He spoke as One who had authority and not as their scribes or teachers." I want you to think about that... the word "authority." You see, I think the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the religious leaders of Jesus' day, were people that were obsessed with control. They wanted things to flow in a certain way. They wanted certain appearances, but Jesus was not concerned with control. He spoke with the authority of God. I believe, for instance, in our setting, that the job of a pastor would be to come into the room and speak the Word of God with authority and then to release control and allow the Word of God and the Holy Spirit of God to do whatever He wants to do through His Word in this place. So we speak with authority so that we can avoid the temptation of control because I think that this is the thing. If we read the New Testament, we realize that the Church, not the place but the people of the Church, once the Word of God took root in their hearts, they were then released and mobilized to engage their particular city. I think that is what God wants to do in our church, in this city, in this time. The reason that I am bringing that up is this: It's that that means that Steve Bezner needs to step aside and to say, "Okay, Lord... You do whatever You want to do through the power of Your Spirit and Your Word." But it also means, if I release control, then the Church has to release the temptation to be apathetic. You see, because if I release control and I speak the Word of God in authority, I can be organized and make a plan, but then the Church must say "Yes, Lord... we will act then upon that plan." Today, I believe that "Advance" is the first step along this journey of us turning toward a church that is obsessed with making disciples and one-on-one, one-on-two, and one-on-three kind of settings. I believe that is the way that the Kingdom of God is going to move forward.

What if you were commissioned to be the pastor of your street? What if you were commissioned to be the pastor of your office, of your neighborhood, of your family? What if God used you and you didn't wait around for the next "Church Event" to make those things happen? What would happen if that was the case? And I believe that is what 1 Thessalonians is about... so let's read this together.

1Thessalonians chapter 1, starting in verse 4: *"For we know, brothers loved by God, that He..."* (that's the Lord) *"...has chosen you, because our Gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit, and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the Word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the Word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything."*

1. With Power and Conviction. (v. 5)

Well... what does that have to do with you and me? Well, actually, I think a pretty great deal, and I want to share that with you today. If we're going to be a church that is going to advance the Kingdom of God forward, I think we definitely need to jump in on some of these things.

First of all, Paul says that the Word of God comes by power and conviction. Look at it... power and conviction... right there in verse 5: *"The Gospel came to you not in word, but in power and in the Holy Spirit and with conviction."* Power and conviction.

I got back from Africa on Thursday night. I was in South Africa, in Johannesburg. I saw some pretty terrible things while I was there, to be real honest with you. I want to show you a couple of pictures of this. This first picture that we're going to show you... This is the most densely populated part of the city of Johannesburg. If you take Johannesburg, Pretoria, Soweto, these cities that are sort of a conglomerate of cities that are right there together, we don't even know how many people live in these cities. The best guess would be maybe 15 million. People just stacked upon people in this part of town. The most people per square meter. We set up a trailer; we had a worship service, a puppet show, preached the Gospel, and counseled some people. It was a pretty powerful time. But why go into a place where there are broken beer bottles and drug paraphernalia and people smoking... whatever they are smoking over in that area... why do that? Why go there? ...Because the Kingdom of God needs to be there. I want to show you another picture. This next picture... this is called a squatter camp. A squatter camp is land that is set aside by the government in South Africa. Immigrants who come to town build shanties or shacks, and they live in these shacks. Raw sewage runs in a ditch down the middle of the street. We brought hot dogs. Have you ever seen people fight over hot dogs? You can if you take them to the squatter camp. Five thousand people live in this neighborhood, just in these shacks with no heating, a little bit of running water at the end that's set there. Why do we go into those places and feed children and share the Gospel? ...Because the Kingdom of God needs to be there.

You see, we talk a lot about the Gospel but a step behind the Gospel is the Kingdom. What is the Kingdom? The Kingdom is anywhere that Jesus is recognized as King and is enthroned. So, for instance, in the Church, Jesus is already King but in the Church we recognize Him as King, and we enthrone Him as King, so the Kingdom of God is seen very clearly throughout the Church body. That is the way it's supposed to be seen. But the Kingdom of God is not limited to gatherings of the Church. The Kingdom of God can be in a business, if the person who runs that business enthrones Jesus as King, recognizes Him as King. If a woman who is a supervisor recognizes Jesus as King and enthrones Him as King in that place, these people can experience the Kingdom of God when the Kingdom principles and the Kingdom way of life is lived out. Wherever God is recognized as King in that place, the Kingdom of God can be there. Why do we care? ...Because our goal, what we pray in the Lord's Prayer, *"Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven..."* "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" is a description of the Kingdom. We pray and we ask God, "God, make Houston more like heaven than hell." That's the Kingdom of God.

The reason that I bring that up is people say, "How do I get into the Kingdom of God?" The entry point into the Kingdom is the Gospel: That Jesus Christ came, that He lived a life that you could never live, that He died the death you ought to have died, and He did that so that you might be forgiven of your sin and then He rose from the grave so that you could know that this God has the power to give you life. The reason that I share all of that is this: It's that the Kingdom is the goal, and the Gospel is entry point into the Kingdom. So you must have the Gospel to get into the Kingdom. Now why am I telling you all of this? ...Because we look at those pictures from Africa and we say, "That's terrible! They clearly need the Kingdom of God." Guys... Houston is just as broken. We're just better at appearances. You see, we've got more money so we can live in a nicer house and mow our yard and put on some nice clothes and iron everything, and then we can get a nice haircut and a bath and go outside. People think we're okay when really we're dying a thousand spiritual deaths. The reason then is this: It's that the Kingdom of God is

needed in our city as much as it is needed on the other side of the world. So whenever I go to the other side of the world, I'm always reminded and I come back and I say, "God, let me see that the brokenness that I saw with my physical eyes in Africa is present in my city. Let me see with my spiritual eyes when I come back home." ...Because our city is broken and you say, "How are we going to overcome that?" ...With the Gospel that comes by power and conviction.

The word "power." The Greek word for it here in this passage is the word "dynamai." In the Gospel of John, it's sometimes "dynamis." "Dynamai" - "Dynamis"... It's the root word where we get our word "dynamite." Explosive. It is the idea that God's Word is so powerful that it can explode barriers. It has so much power that it can destroy sin, that it can overcome whatever addiction, whatever problem you have in your life. We need power. Why don't we think about this? I don't know. We don't think in spiritual terms sometimes. You see, sometimes we have limited and we have truncated our Gospel down to a point where it's really just about a "Get Out Of Hell Free" card. Listen... this is not just about the afterlife. This is about living the Gospel now, before you die. So how does that happen? It happens because you have that power in your life now.

Every problem you have in your life has a spiritual root to which the Gospel of Jesus Christ can be applied. Every problem. Do you have marriage problems? You've got a spiritual root. You see, this is the thing. People who have marriage problems, it means that at least one, if not both people within the marriage have decided not to reflect Jesus Christ, because when two people are reflecting and seeking after Jesus Christ, guess what? No marriage problems. But it's not just marriage, right? Addiction. What is addiction? Addiction is you deciding that a substance or a behavior will bring you more pleasure than Jesus, so you have decided to act on that behavior or that substance rather than finding ultimate pleasure in Christ... a spiritual root to that problem. What about anger? You get angry. Why? ...Because you wanted things to go a certain way and they didn't. You've got a control issue. You see, so you think that you should get to control things and God says, "Well, I don't know if you know this but I'm in control." So this is the way that it works. Our anger problem actually is a spiritual problem because we don't trust the control of God. Our judgemental problem is a problem because we don't trust the judgment of God. Our revenge problem is we don't trust the justice of God. Every problem that we have, whether it's a problem with the words that we speak or a feeling that we have in our heart... insecurity... We don't receive the identity given to us in Christ. Whatever it is, every problem we have has a spiritual root. Do you believe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ can address whatever your problem is? You see, the reason that power is used is that this is what Paul is saying. "The problem, the struggle, the temptation that you have when it encounters the power of the cross and of the empty tomb, it has the life expectancy of a beaver dam on an episode of Duck Dynasty because it will be exploded by the power of the Gospel. So this is important. You need to know that your God has given you a power-filled Gospel.

Mark 16 has been destroying me the last three weeks. I read Mark 16 a few weeks ago, and it was like God just grabbed me and just started shaking me. You read the story of the Resurrection... I want you to hear this... It was like God just spoke so clearly to me, as I see the empty tomb. It was like the Lord just spoke to me and He said, "Steve... I raise the dead." That Spirit that raised the dead is in you. You do not access the power given to you by the Gospel. Do you want to know why we can't overcome these issues? ...Because we do not believe that we have the power to raise the dead within us. Even now, some of you are going, "I mean, that's a little crazy..." You see, here's the thing. If we can actually have access to the same Spirit of God that raised the dead, what could ever stand against us? Oh... I remember what it says here... "Nothing... Nothing can stand against you because you have the power of God"... the power to

raise the dead within you so then God says, "I have given you the Spirit to raise the dead." That kind of power is within you... guess what? Now I want you to hear this: Now come with conviction.

What is "conviction"? "Conviction" is when you believe something so strongly in your heart that if you were to change that conviction, it would make you a radically different person. That's what a conviction is. It's a deeply held belief that forms who you are. The Scripture says that the Gospel comes in power and in conviction. What does that mean? It means that you begin to hold a deeply held belief that it is the most important way... it is the only way... it is the powerful way. Let me ask you a question: "Do you believe that the only way to live is by following Jesus Christ?" ...Because if you do not believe that, you do not have a conviction. The Gospel comes and brings power and it brings conviction. The way that the world is changed is when we decide, "Do I believe that the cross of Jesus can forgive anyone? Do I believe that the empty tomb gives the power of the Gospel to anyone? Do I believe that that power is within me?" If the answer to that is "Yes" then we have to apply it.

So look at what happens once you believe that. This is where it gets crazy. Look at verse 8: *"For not only has the Word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything."* This part is crazy to me. Paul says that they receive the power of the Gospel with such conviction that it says they begin to imitate Paul and the Lord. Then it says that once they did that, the Word of the Lord spread out from the Church, so Paul says, "We need not say anything." Who is the "we"? Look at verse 1: The "we" is Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy... the guys who started the Church. What did he say? He says, "These people have so owned the Gospel and have gone so hard after the Lord within their city, we don't even get to preach anymore." We don't say anything because the people that have heard the Gospel are now doing something with it.

What would happen if I didn't need to preach ever again? I mean... besides me getting fired... but other than that. It would mean that an explosive, exponential movement of God was happening in this place. That happens when the people of God decide, "No longer will I simply entrust the paid professionals to handle the proclamation of the Gospel, but now I will make disciples as well." Matthew 28:19, the Great Commission... Maybe you've heard it before... *"Go therefore into all the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."* Now that is the last command given to us by God before His Son Jesus comes up and ascends to the right hand of the Father. The last thing He says, "Go and make disciples, baptizing them, teaching them..." Four verbs there; only one of them is an imperative... only one. An imperative, for those of you who haven't had grammar in a while, is a command. "Go clean your room." That's a command; that's an imperative. Right? ...Only one imperative. What is the imperative in the sentence? I always thought it was "Go." It is not "Go." Did you know that? It actually says, "As you are going..." ...Because the Lord knew that you weren't going to stay at home all the time. You're busy people. You've got stuff going on. Right? "As you are going... As you are doing these things... do one thing for Me. Make disciples." "Wherever you are going, tell people about Me and teach them about Me, teaching them to obey the commands and baptize them. As you are going, make disciples." Make disciples... that is the only command that Jesus gave as He left this planet. "Go and tell people about Me and teach them about Me." This is the crazy thing: Whenever I tell you that, you think, "Well, that sounds pretty good, but are you sure that He was really talking to me? Wasn't He talking to preachers?" The answer to that is actually "No; He was talking to you." Let me tell you why. ...Because He gave that command to all the Church, and that means that if I preach the Word of God with authority and then you go, I lose control. Right? I don't get to tell you who to go to but you know, because the Lord has already told you, "Go and make disciples." ...Your family, your neighborhood, your

office... wherever it is that the Lord has asked you to go. I lose control in a beautiful, good way, because the way that the Kingdom of God grows is that I don't control it but the Holy Spirit of God does.

2. Subtraction, Addition, And Multiplication.

Yesterday I was outside throwing the football with Andrew in our front yard. As we were doing that, I noticed a bunch of stuff happening around my neighborhood. I saw three different trucks of lawn crews going around mowing yards. I saw an air conditioner repair truck. I saw a plumbing truck. I saw a delivery service... somebody was getting some balloons or something. I don't know what was going on at that point. I saw a lot of different professional services going on. A drycleaner came by, making some deliveries. I bring all this up because it hit me yesterday, as I was looking at this. We are a people who love to outsource our work to the professionals. We love to do that. The Kingdom of God cannot grow if you attempt to outsource the spiritual growth of your children to me. The Kingdom of God cannot grow if you attempt to outsource the evangelization of your neighbors and coworkers to me. You see, a lot of us are under the delusion, "Man, the city sure is going to hell. I hope those guys at the church have something to take care of that." (Laughter) No, no, no... Let me tell you. We do have a plan. You're it. If you do not reach the lost, no one will reach the lost. God has put you where He has put you for a reason, for this season. You are there so that God can use you in power and in that way. You see, the funny thing is that we think, "Well, couldn't we just add a worship service or build a bigger building?" Man, that would be great. I would love to have ten worship services. We can fit maybe 1500 chairs in here... probably 1400. Okay; let's say we have ten worship services... 14,000 people. I don't know if you know this... There are a lot more than 14,000 people that live around here.

Yesterday, the largest-attended football game ever held in the State of Texas happened at Texas A&M... 110,000 people were there yesterday. We go, "That would be incredible." Let's pretend that today we could build a building that held 110,000 people and we decided that today. In the time that it would take us to get the engineering done and the building built and all that kind of stuff done... let's say we could do it within a year and a half... in that time, to build a church that would hold 110,000 people... do you know that Houston would grow by more than 110,000 people? Addition is a losing game, people. Just because we add people to the church and invite them to come, we are still falling behind. It's the most dangerous illusion because we feel like we're doing something but we're still losing ground. What do we have to do? We have to do something different. Here's the crazy thing. Some of us are just subtracters. We show up, we take, and we go home. If you're a subtracter or an adder, that's great but we need Kingdom math, and Kingdom math is multiplication. The way that Kingdom math works is this: It's that you see yourself right now as a fully commissioned minister of the Gospel wherever God has placed you. Whenever we leave here today, 700 people in this room, 700 churches are commissioned the second that church lets out every Sunday. You go and you pastor those churches wherever God has placed you because God does not have an idea of the Kingdom being limited to what happens on Sunday mornings.

Let me break this down maybe a little bit differently. Whenever I was in sixth grade, I got this word problem. I know... this is how dorky I am. I remember a word problem from sixth-grade math. I know... it's embarrassing. It stays with me and I want to share it with you today. I want you to understand the power of multiplication. Let's pretend that you could have a choice. I'm going to give you an amount of money every day for 30 days. You can either choose between getting one dollar a day every day for 30 days... OR... option B... You get a penny on day 1, and two pennies on day 2, and four pennies on day 3, and eight pennies on day 4, and so on. Which one would be the better one to do? Now, I mean, you're intelligent people. You've already said, "It's got to be the second one because he's talking about

multiplication so I know that's what it's got to be. Alright... you got me. But let me show you the difference here. If you took a penny on day 1... at the end of the other one, you would have thirty dollars. Right? What would you receive on the final day... on day 30... if you did this? This is what you would receive: You would receive \$2,684,354.56. You were sitting there... I think it might be a little bit better. (Laughter) Oh... it's better alright. It's way better. This is the way that multiplication works.

Rodney Starks, sociologist at Baylor University, did a study... best guess, based on ancient documents, ancient population estimates and all this kind of stuff... Christians in the year 40 AD made up 0.0017 percent of the population of the ancient world in the year 40 AD. Three hundred and ten years later, in 350 AD, best guess... Christians made up 56.5 percent of the population. How does a religious movement go from being 0.0017 percent of the population to 56 percent the population within 310 years? Multiplication. People decide, "I'm not just going to leave it to the paid professionals. I am instead going to take the Gospel, and I'm going to pour it into one other person." So let me show you the math. What if our church, and only our church, we're not even going to bring other churches into this... we're selfish... just us. Let's pretend that just us decided to do this. For the life of this church, we've run somewhere between 700 and 1500. You say, "What can a church of 1500 do in a city of six million people?" I'm going to show you. Let's pretend that 1500 people that are coming to our church on Sunday mornings right now... let's say that every person, every year, reached one person for Christ and discipled them. You just met one person and you discipled them. Then the following year, those two people then each shared Christ and discipled one person. Let's pretend that we could extrapolate that out for 13 years. How many people would our church reach for the Gospel in 13 years? ... 12,288,000! And that's if just this church did it. And we keep saying, "I don't know if we really have as good of a youth program as Church B." Who cares? (Laughter) We've got the Gospel of Jesus Christ! And we have the power, if we get serious, to literally reach the entire city of Houston in 13 years. There are six million people in the greater Houston area. We're talking double that within 13. What does that mean? It means that the way that the Kingdom of God spreads is through multiplication. You know this; Jesus already talked about this. It's like a woman who had a little bit of yeast and she put it into a batch of dough, and suddenly it worked its way through the entire batch of dough. It's like a seed that's planted and whenever it comes up on good soil, it brings up a crop of 30-, 60-, or even 100-fold. Jesus was all about multiplication. This is the thing: We are intended to be multipliers. So should we or will we? What if we decided as a church and what if we just said, "Hey, nobody goes to hell in our part of town." If you go to hell in our part of town, that's because you just chose to because, I mean, we came to you, we told you about Jesus, and you said, "No, I do not want this." This is what "Advance" is about. It's us recognizing and realizing that we want to raise up an army and train up an army to go and to engage this city. That's what multiplication is about.

So how are we going to do that? I'm glad that you asked. This is the thing. We are going to, for the next six weeks, begin now to turn the ship of Houston Northwest toward this. This is not a sermon series. This is not an emphasis. This is not a campaign. This is a philosophical shift in the way we are going to do church. You are going to be tired of hearing about making disciples over the next 30 years. You're going to be, "What? Are we ever going to talk about anything else?" No... we're not. We're going to talk about this and you're going to either A) Leave or B) Make some disciples. That's basically all you've got. This is the reason that we're going to do that... Because it's what the Scripture tells us to do. Jesus gave one command: *"Go and make disciples."*

Whenever you leave today, at the kiosk, there are these books available called, "Make Mature Multiply." These books are put out by Gospel-Centered Discipleship. I just want to invite you to go grab one of these. We've got one for every person who's here. If you can, we're asking that you give five dollars to help cover

our cost. If you say, "Steve, I don't know if you know this. It's the 21st century; nobody carries cash anymore." That's fine; just take your book and you can go home and give us five dollars online. If you say, "I don't have any money," that's fine; take the book anyway. If you have ten dollars, put ten dollars in there, take a book, and pay for somebody who doesn't have any cash... Whatever. We want to give those to you today. There are 37 chapters about how to disciple your kids, how to share your faith at work, how to make, mature, and multiply disciples.

Many of us are in Life Groups, but many of us are not. For six weeks, we want to ask every single person at Houston Northwest to be in a Life Group. Life Groups meet on campus on Sunday morning, and we have tons of them that meet in homes all around the city, on different nights of the week. Many people have volunteered and say, "I will start a Life Group during this time." We have written a curriculum... doesn't it look nice? It looks like we bought it. We actually didn't. We had this printed... we made this... we wrote it... we filmed videos: Me, Pastor Darren, Pastor Jeremy; teaching on discipleship from 1 Thessalonians... about 15- to 20-minute videos and then to discuss the questions that are here in the book. We want to ask you if you would be part of a group. At the back there are tables, and they have the days of the week written above those tables. Just as soon as we're done here, get up and go to one of those tables and sign up and say, "Hey, I'll come to one of these groups." Someone is going to contact you and say, "This is where this group meets" and at what time. We want to ask everyone to do this for six weeks. It's between now and Thanksgiving so that we can do that. Why? ...Because we believe that you need to either A) Disciple someone or B) You need to be discipled. Maybe you're C) Both; maybe someone needs to train you, and you need to pour into someone else. This is what the Scripture is all about, and this is the way that the Church of Jesus Christ is going to move forward and is going to spread like yeast through the entire batch of dough of our city. It's because we decided to get serious about what God has called us to do in Jesus Christ.

This is what I want us to do. I want to just ask you right now, "Is God calling you to disciple someone?" or "Is God calling you to sign up to be discipled?" If so, would you say "Yes"? Is God this calling you to pastor your apartment complex? Is God calling you to pastor your family? Is God calling you to pastor your street? If the answer is "Yes," will you simply do something for me today and act on it. Let's let the Kingdom of God advance because that's what God wants anyway. Let's pray together.

"Father, we love You. We thank You for what You have done and what You continue to do. Lord, I pray now that You would speak to us and lead us. Show us what it is that You want us to do and how to respond. God, I pray that our church would act on Your Word, that we would be faithful and Lord, that You would show us how we can say 'Yes.' We pray this is the Name of Your Son Jesus Christ. Amen."