

THE TABLE

SEVEN WAYS TO LEAD LIKE JESUS



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THE TABLE:

SEVEN WAYS TO LEAD LIKE JESUS

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INTRODUCTION

LEADING FROM THE TABLE

Jesus led from the table. He taught, by His example, that the table was a powerful place of possibility and leadership. He sat down over and over at the table with different hosts throughout His ministry. He would wine and dine with Pharisees or a group of good friends like Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. He ate and drank and celebrated relationship so much that He was even accused of gluttony by some onlookers. He would sit and enjoy the company of controversial people. The Gospels register two occasions that he sat at a table with tax collectors, a despised group of sellouts according to Jewish culture. However, through the power of the table, one of these outcasts came to form an important part of His team while the other tax collector radically changed his way of life after eating with Jesus. The table of Jesus was transformational, and His efforts at the table weren't accidental or haphazard. He was extremely calculated and aimed at His cause of "drawing all men to Himself." With surgical precision, He chose the most strategic place to transform His disciples into those who would carry on His mission after He would be crucified. He chose the same place to meet with the undesirables of His society. Jesus did not entrust the future of His Kingdom to an elevated platform, but to a lowly table where men could see eye to eye and women were invited as well. He chose a place where the need of humanity intersected with the provision of eternity. It all happened at "The Table." As you journey into this resource, we would invite you to look past the brevity of the content or any mistakes discovered in the text. We would invite you to discover the unmistakable strategy of Jesus that would turn the world upside down; a strategy we call "leading from the table."







A TABLE FOR TWO

by **Dennis Arévalo**

MULTIPLi Regional Leadership Coach & Senior Pastor of Iglesia Centro de Fuego

It's one of my favorite phrases when I have a date with Charmian, my wife. "Table for two, please." I really enjoy when we go out to eat with the whole family, but at a table for two there is something very special. It's where we spend a special time alone, she and I; we talk, we laugh, we open our hearts, and we eat together:

The table is a place where we can enjoy good food, good company, and a good conversation. For me it's a place of intimacy, it's a place where I can open my heart with friends new and old. But I wouldn't change anything about those special moments when I sit at a table for two with the one who I love the most: my wife.

Jesus loved to sit at a table with His disciples. In Luke 22:1 He said, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you..." (NKJV). For Jesus the table was, among other things, a place of: (Luke 22:24-30)

- Discussion (v. 24)
- Teaching (v.25)
- Loyalty/Recognition (v. 28,29)
- Authority (v.29)
- Affection: John, the beloved disciple (v.30)

In Emmaus, after the recently resurrected Jesus met with two of His disciples along the way, He sat at the table with them (Luke 24:30-31). In that moment the table was, for the disciples, a place of COMMUNION (v. 30) and a place of REVELATION (v.31).

Twenty years ago when I began to go out with Charmian, we only went out in groups. So when we went to dinner or to eat something, we almost always arrived at the restaurant and asked for a table for four or five. I took two friends with me as chaperones and she brought a friend. Our conversations were very fun and we had a good time. That is until one day in September of 1998 when I told her that I wanted to invite her to dinner with me. She asked me if she should bring a friend or if it would be just us. I said to her, "Just the two of us."

Arriving at the restaurant that night it was exciting for me to say, "A table for two, please." That night was the night that I opened my heart and I declared to my best friend my feelings and my love for her. That night that table transformed for us both into a place of COMMUNION and REVELATION.

Jesus enjoyed seating Himself with people. He surely enjoyed seating himself at a table with His twelve, with three, with four, etc. Further, the Bible tells us the following in Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" (NKJV).

Allow me to propose to you that Jesus has not changed His desire to sit down with us. I believe that His passion continues to be the desire to be alone with you and with me to know each of us more intimately. His presence assures us that this place is a place where we can open our heart and be ourselves. This table is a place of joy, security, and peace. And many times it transforms into a banquet that He Himself has prepared in the presence of our enemies. Jesus is at the door! He is waiting for you! Do you want to open the door? What are you going to do? For my part I am again going to prepare a table for two.

LOOKING IN THE MIRROR

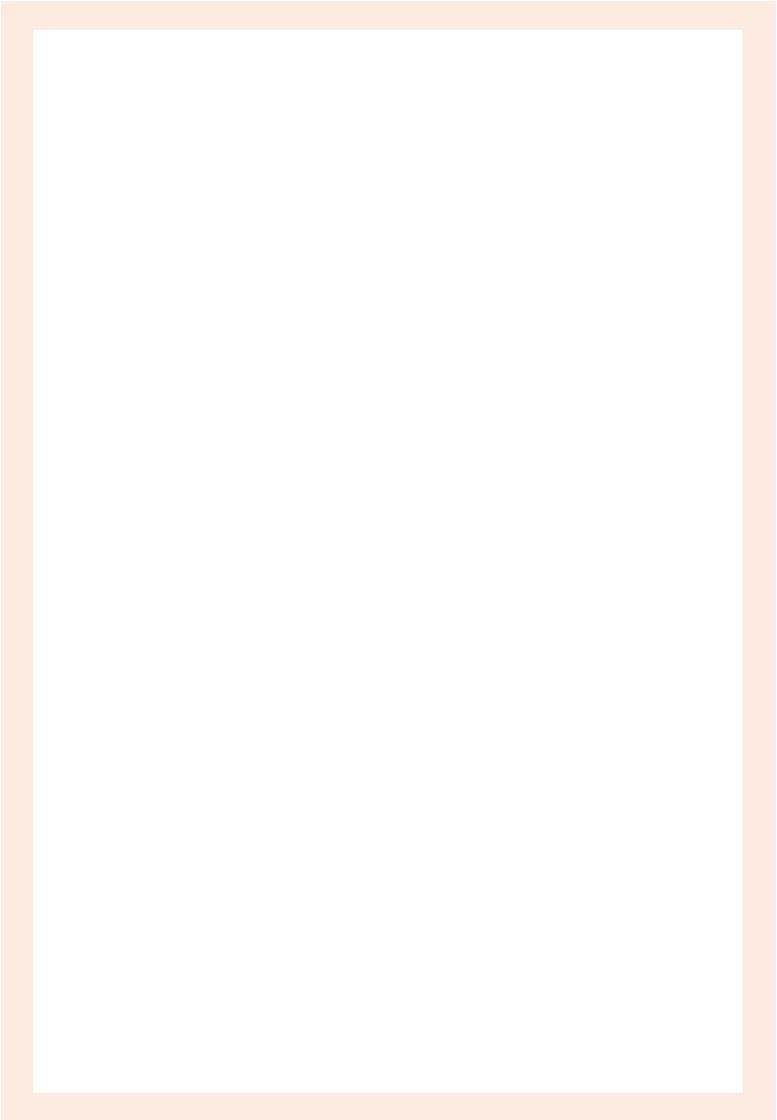
1. Do you believe that Jesus desires to sit at a table with you for intimate conversation? Do you desire that communion and revelation with Him?



2. What steps can you take today to prepare a table for two where you can meet with Jesus?



NOTES







MERCY AT THE TABLE

by Charmian Squire de Arévalo

Church Leader at Centro de Fuego Church | Lima, Peru

Scripture: Luke 7: 36 - 50

Jesus looked at the crowd and had compassion on them when He saw that they were like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus always stopped for the one and had compassion on the individual. He spoke to the multitude, but always had time for the individual, to sit at the table, to have a personal encounter; to look into their eyes, to speak into their hearts. In His eyes was deep love and mercy.

That is what Jesus showed the sinful woman who approached Him at the table, a table set by Simon the Pharisee. Where Simon showed no honour, Jesus did. Where Simon showed no mercy, Jesus did. She came as she was with all she had (a costly perfume in an alabaster jar) and her many sins were forgiven.

We are called to show mercy to people. It's easy in church life to lead from the front, but the biggest challenge is to spend time with individuals who are sometimes in great need, to listen to their problems, to be patient with their struggles, and to listen with attention.

It is easy to get overwhelmed when we show mercy to many people day after day. It is important to have times of recreation and retreat in order not to suffer from burnout. Our own personal times with God are so important and we see Jesus retreating into the desert and for personal times with the Father in order to recharge and rest. Whether it's time in nature, a sport, something creative, a

coffee with friends, it's important to recover and re-create.

Recently in Peru there has been an influx of Venezuelan refugees. Angelina Jolie visited a refuge in Lima for refugees and the photos of her interacting with the people and looking into their eyes are very moving. She is the UN representative for refugees. The mercy and compassion in her speech at Congress is very reminiscent of Jesus's approach to those in need.

Prince Harry was recently in Australia and when climbing to the top of the Sydney bridge he was introduced to the widow of a war veteran who had committed suicide. Harry's security guards tried to rush him along quickly, but he insisted on spending time with the lady, hugging her, and showing mercy to her. Many times, Jesus's disciples were confused by the way Jesus chose to spend His time. Jesus was never in a rush and only did what the Father called him to do.

Mercy and compassion are human traits, not just Christian traits. Our calling as Christians is to show the same attitude as Jesus, to reach out to those around us, and not allow our hearts to grow cold.

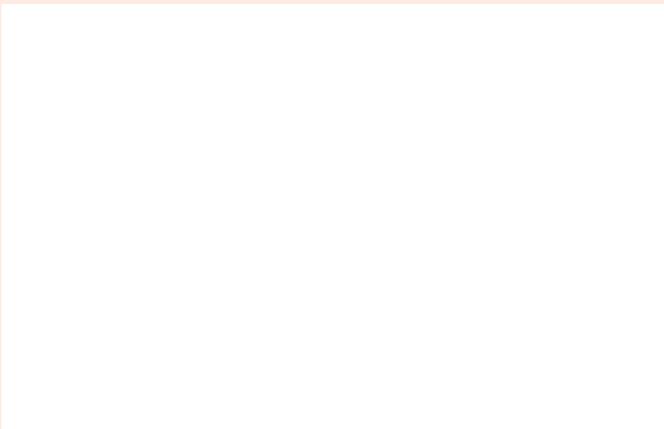
Let's look after our own physical, emotional, and spiritual health so that we are filled with the Spirit and able to reach out to those in need from a place of deep mercy.

LOOKING IN THE MIRROR

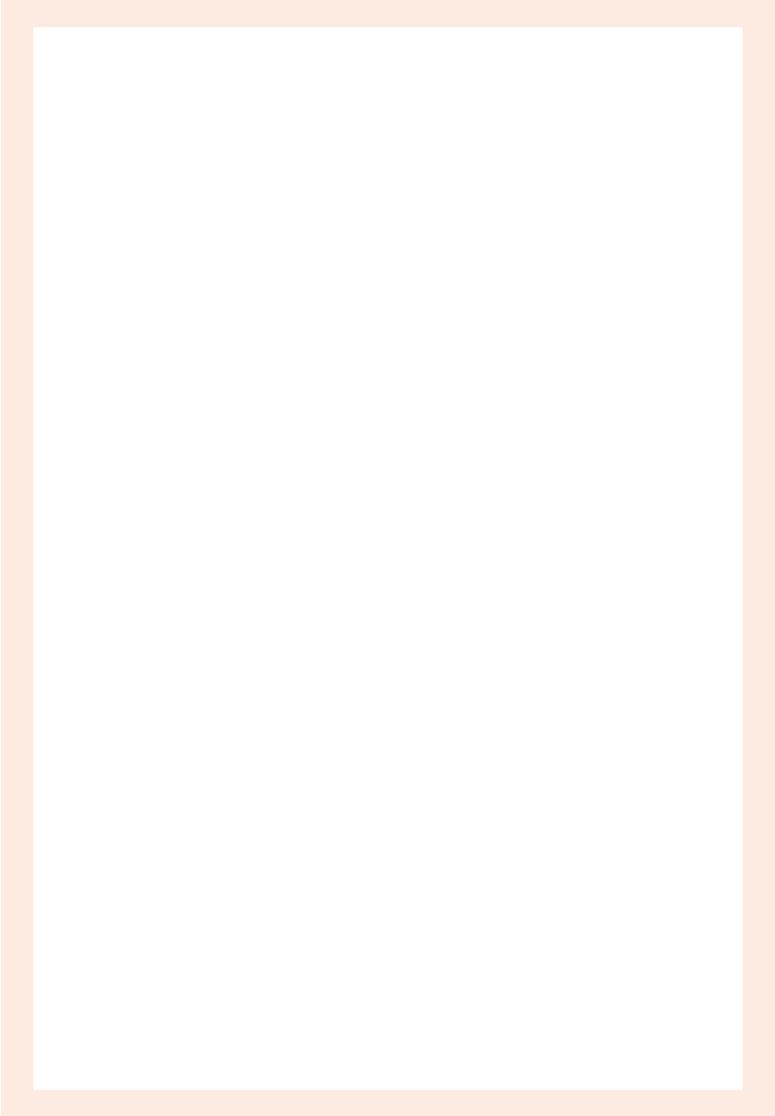
1. In what situations do you find it difficult to show mercy to others?



2. What steps do you need to take in order to be physically, emotionally, and spiritually ready to show mercy to others?



NOTES







THE TENSION AT THE TABLE

by **Mariano Neira Sambuceti**

Founder of Miraflores Church | Lima, Peru

“Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord’s feet, listening to His word. But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.” But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:38-42)

To be or to do.

As believers and followers of Jesus, there exists an undeniable tension between two forces that fight to define our lifestyle. Let’s call it the “tension at the table.” It’s the tension between who we are, which we could call identity, and what we do, which we could call activity. I want to invite you to reflect on an idea that could be decisive for the next steps that you want to take in your life.

The first force tells us that following Jesus is an action and therefore causes us to be in constant motion. It drives us to always keep ourselves busy in order to take advantage of the resources that God has given us and thus bear fruit to the fullest for the advancement of His will on Earth. I call this first force **ACTIVITY**. The second force, on the contrary, leads us to be still and contemplate Jesus. It leads us to know His gestures, His habits, and His heart. It leads us to slowly process His kindness, His love, and His beauty. This second force fills our energy tank to the point that we would leave any other issue aside in order to live longer in that place with Jesus. This second force is called **INTIMACY**.

I would like to share a bit of my story. For a long time I spent hours each day making sure that I was busy doing "the things of God." While I had a successful secular job that took up much of my weekly schedule as a bachelor, almost all my free time was assigned to what I thought was serving God: participating in singles groups at church giving Bible-based messages, going on all the possible mission trips to help less-fortunate people, and even hosting friends in my house to share time with and counsel them. Rest was never a priority at that time in my life. But the years went by and the burden that at some point was slight, suddenly became a trap from which it was very difficult to free myself. The result of so much effort was simply feeling that I was never going to be enough to fulfill the expectations of God or the people next to me.

I need you to believe me, I really made a huge effort to build a mask that sought to reflect that "everything is fine here" in order to feel loved by God and by others. After all, if I am a child of God, everything had to be fine with me. However, all masks have an expiration date and mine was no exception. I got tired of not feeling really loved. Because during all that time, it was not me who received the love that I hoped to receive, it was my mask, the persona that I had created.

Exhausted from so many years of effort, I decided to take off my mask and recognize that I did not have everything handled. I decided that I had to rest and dedicate myself to contemplating the Person for whom I had been doing all these activities. And this is the conclusion I have reached: I am loved not because of what I do, but because of who I am. My identity is far more important than my activity. Furthermore, as I contemplate Jesus and spend time talking with Him, I discover that He fills my fuel tank for all the activity that will come later.

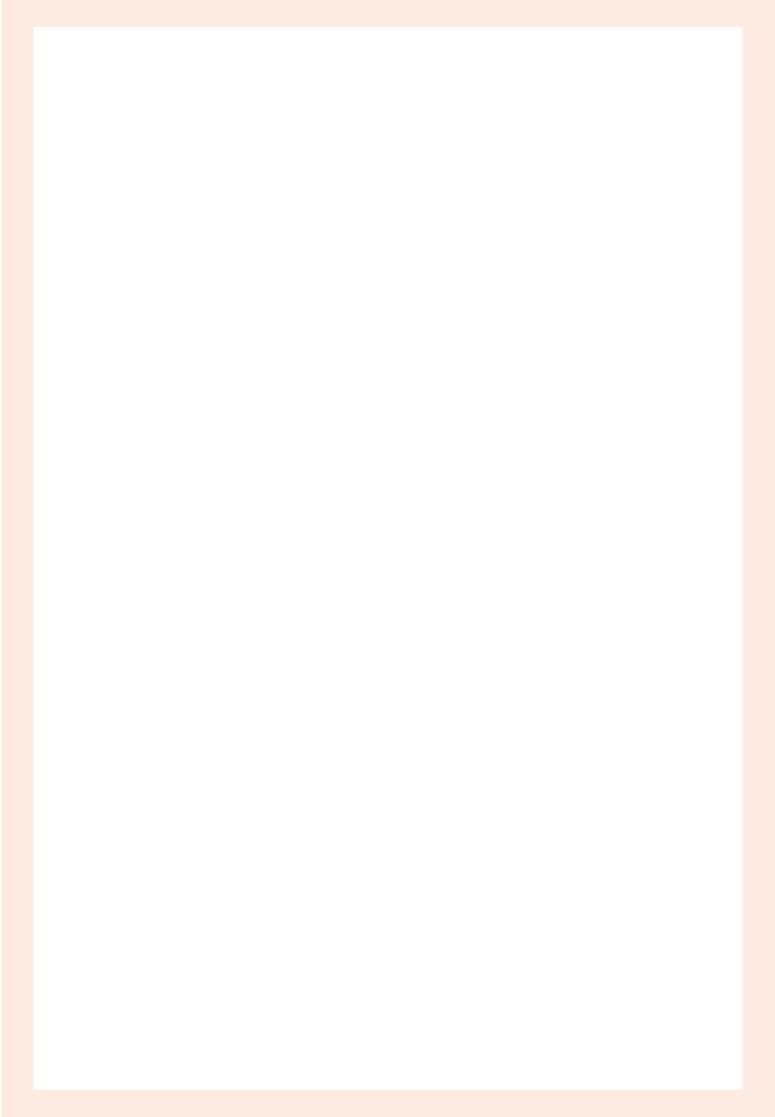
So, activity or intimacy? Intimacy unveils identity. Activity without identity and intimacy can leave us feeling deeply unloved. Intimacy with God will lead us to activity which is aligned with His perfect plans and purposes. Mary knew how to prioritize the intimacy over the activity and, once that treasure was discovered, nobody could take it away from her. I invite you to discover how beautiful it is to sit at the table with Jesus, without anxiety about having to do something to please Him. The “you” that you are with Him already pleases Him enough. Without excessive efforts or masks, you and Him, face to face, at THE TABLE.

LOOKING IN THE MIRROR

1. Are you guilty of replacing intimacy with activity in your relationship with Jesus?

2. What changes could you make to ensure that your focus is on intimacy and your identity in Christ and not on activity?

NOTES







THE ROUND TABLE OF THE KING

by Pastor Sebastian Alencastre

Pastor of La Ciudad Church | Lima, Peru

Sitting at the king's table is one of the most precious honors a person can have. From the time of David, we see how this distinction was not for everyone, because only the men closest to the king would sit down to eat with him, most of them, high army commanders, royal advisors, and even men who had won a pass for a day at that table. But those who were invited and said yes to the invitation to the table discovered something surprising about the king's table. It was round and everyone at the table was equally valuable to him.

Knowing all this, I want to invite you to imagine the day when King David learns that the son of his beloved friend Jonathan is alive. This man was named Mephibosheth and was the only survivor of Saul's family. His life story, full of suffering, injustice, and pain, is marked by his condition of being crippled, of not being able to walk for life. David knows his history of suffering and, being a king with the right heart, he felt the need to honor this sole survivor of Saul's family. The honor that David bestowed was not giving him a lot of money, nor property or recognition. The highest honor was sitting at his table.

If this had not happened, maybe his story would not have been as powerful as it is. What makes it wonderful is to see how a crippled person, submerged in misery, is invited to eat at the royal table for the rest of his life.

This story teaches us the principle of the Kingdom table that Jesus has prepared us. This table is not limited, it is not square, much less is it a place of work. This table is a place of honor, not because of how good we are, but because of the grace we receive from Jesus when we look

at the cross. This table is for your children and there is a lot of space. But you must know four principles of the Kingdom table based on Luke 14: 7-14 which we must apply in our leadership.

1. Let others be seated closer.

This demands humility and maturity. Within this table we must invite others to move to the seats closest to the king John said it like this: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30, NASB). When we do, we encourage growth in others. The leader who always seeks to be first in everything does nothing but spoil the growth of those whom God is wanting to raise up.

Ask yourself the following: Is your leadership based on others sitting behind or in front of you?

2. Only if you serve will you be served.

Leadership demands service. Our leadership must be service and not government. Jesus teaches us to serve those at the table. He washed feet and at His table the Lord will attend us; thus, we must do the same with others. It is as if you are serving a cup to the one next to you while Jesus serves ours at the same time. Never stop attending to others at the table.

Ask yourself the following: Does your aspiration for leadership focus on others serving you?

Remember: The growth of your leadership does not focus on increasing the number of people serving below you, it focuses on increasing your capacity to serve others.

3. You can not go alone, you must take guests.

Knowing that there is room at Christ's table, we must grab hold of this principle and fill the empty seats. Many of us make the mistake of making the table exclusive, for only a few. I want you to remember that the table has an order of priorities, and the first are the most vulnerable.

Ask yourself the following: How many guests do you have? How many did you really serve? What is the capacity of your table?

Remember: Focus on growing your reception capacity and your table will have more and more guests.

4. The table is not a place to condemn or judge.

At the table we must place value on people, we must invite them to sit down and make them feel loved, cared for, listened to, and served. Our leadership must focus on making others feel worthy of the Kingdom, restoring dignity to people, and seeing them as the Father sees them.

Ask yourself the following: Are you taking care of the people at a table of honor? Are you at the right table?

Remember: People can come to the Kingdom table but they can leave with a sick stomach if we do not serve them the right food.

LOOKING IN THE MIRROR

1. Do you lead from a place of service? What changes might be needed in this area?



2. Is the table from which you lead a round table of equality where there is no condemnation or judgement?







BETRAYED AT THE TABLE

by **Bill Shrader, D. Min.**

Director of Child Hope Peru & Pastor of Centro de Crecimiento Familiar | Lima, Peru

Judas is the most famous traitor of all. Luke 22:21 says, "But here at this table, sitting among us as a friend, is the man who will betray me. (NLT)"

In Jewish culture, the table was a place of friendship and trust, a safe place. For this reason, Christ said, "But here at this table, sitting among us as a friend...". The phrase, "as a friend" is a painful phrase - because we know that Judas was not a faithful friend. His betrayal was so horrible that even now we have a bad saying about his action; that is to say, "the kiss of Judas."

I have received the kiss of Judas, and I am not alone. Unfortunately, the world is full of stories of a friend betraying another friend. It is always sad, but it is even sadder among brothers and sisters of the faith. It is a conflict of values in that one trusts so much in a brother because honesty and faithfulness are fundamental values of Christianity. A person must have a heart so hard, without shame nor empathy, to wound his own brother under the cover of false trust. But, sadly, this happens.

Framed for a crime: My kiss of Judas came from a ministry colleague. I arrived in a new position in the ministry that had suffered a crime over a long time, and the perpetrator had to cover his tracks. That's how I arrived home one night an innocent and honored citizen only to see the news and realize that my ministry colleague had been planning my downfall. Even though I was declared innocent, I remained resentful.

Hardening of the heart: There is a hardening of the heart. It is necessary to have a hard heart to cause such harm to a friend. But there is also a hardness of heart among the victims. It is especially atrocious

among Christians - those who are supposed to represent trust and security.

Being betrayed tempts us to close our hearts and never trust again. But that is not what we see in Jesus. In Luke 22, Peter denied the Lord three times. And, in John 21:15-17, the Lord forgave and restored Peter. The Lord restored me, too, while I was in a struggle against the hardening of my own heart.

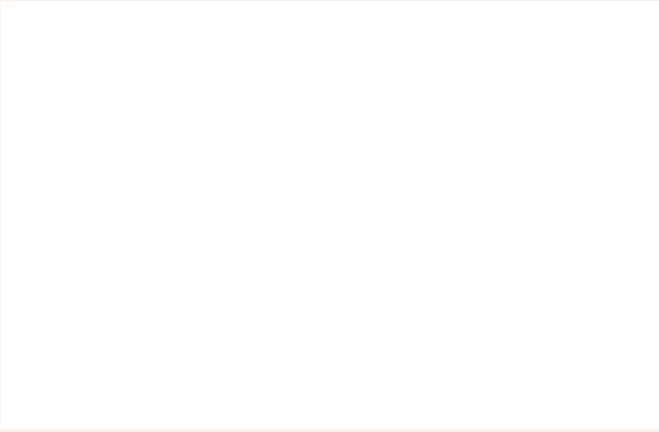
The hard heart is what you must watch out for more than anything else. In Matthew 19:8, Jesus says that the hardness of the heart is what destroys marriages, and in Mark 6:52, the apostles could not grasp the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves because their hearts were hard. The hardness of the heart will prevent you from seeing Jesus doing miracles, even if it is there in plain sight.

Forgiveness: Although it is expensive and painful, one must forgive and trust God to have a functioning heart. Jesus trusted in the supreme justice of God instead of defending himself. I do not have that in me, not to that degree; but I do it trusting in Jesus. He is the king of justice. He will judge the other person in a way that I can not. And He will take care of me.

The kiss of Judas should not leave a scar. By the power of the Holy Spirit, one can forgive and learn to put his life (and the life of the traitor) in the hands of the Just Judge to defend the innocent and heal the wounded hearts.

LOOKING IN THE MIRROR

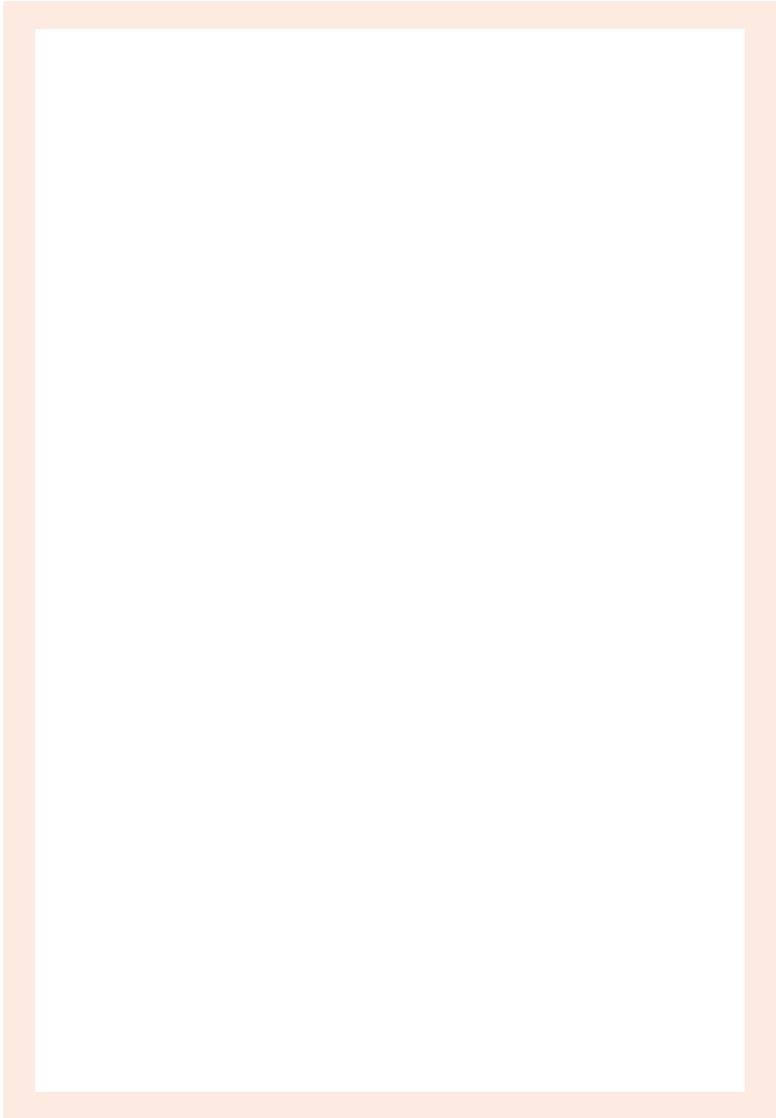
1. Do you still have resentment, a scar, or a wounded heart from a kiss of Judas in your life?



2. What is preventing you from forgiving and receiving full healing by the power of the Holy Spirit?



NOTES







BREAKING TRADITIONS AT THE TABLE

by **Rev. Mutinda Musyimi**

Lead Pastor of City Church Nairobi | Nairobi, Kenya

Scripture: Luke 11: 37-44; Luke 14: 1-6

I come from a community that keenly observes traditions. From my experience, traditions can be quite inhibiting, and especially because of the fear of being condemned by the society for failure to observe them. Very rarely does anyone question, and especially the “why” of traditions. The problem with blindly adhering to tradition is that tradition can be based on surface appearances and what others think.

Luke seems to have established a pattern of Jesus’s attack on tradition, especially about the Sabbath and the washing of hands. The Pharisees, not surprisingly, are “watching Him closely” (14:1), possibly because of what they have heard about Him in the past (e.g., Lk.6:6-11 and Lk.13:10-17). The Pharisees are trying to trap Jesus, either in some activity like healing on the Sabbath (cf. 6:7) or something inappropriate he might say or do against their traditions (cf. Lk. 20:20).

Let’s be clear, Jesus never broke the commandments of God. But He did often challenge the legalism of the Pharisees. This was because they set man’s traditions above the law of God. The sad thing about tradition is that it easily becomes a cataract in the eyes of humanity, leading to blind allegiance. Rules begin to become more important than relationships. Strict adherence to tradition can also lead people to obsess over rituals and disregard motives and the condition of people’s hearts.

Traditions not only create a generation gap, but also a spiritual gap

and self-righteousness. Jesus Christ was constantly opposed by the religious leaders of the Jews. The Jews had no room for compromise with any new ideology which tended to deviate the traditions of the elders. The conflicts continued from the beginning of Jesus's ministry until it reached a climax and ultimately led to the crucifixion of Jesus.

The religious authorities burdened people with heavy loads of "works" and offered no assistance to those they so heavily weighted. But Jesus values relationships and wholeness over rules. He liberally healed on the Sabbath, shared a table with sinners, and allowed the rejects of society to touch him. As He lived out His life, His daily brushes with real people—real sinners—painted a different picture of a God who cared, who transformed, and who loved more than anyone could ever imagine.

Today's traditional religious doctrines are widely accepted and highly popular; yet we must ask ourselves if they contradict what God says. God's invitation to the table is available to everyone, but worldly traditions block the faith required to receive what He has for us. Believing religious dogma can lead to wrong ideas about sin, grace, and the authority of the believer, and keep us from feasting at the Table with Christ.

Even today Jesus says, "Come to the Table as you are!" He specializes in cleansing sinners and reforming those rejected by the society. An addict? A prostitute? A thief? Self-righteous? Stigmatized? Jesus says, "Come as you are and dine with me and you shall be free!" Breaking away from tradition takes courage. We can choose whether to accept His invite or follow worldly philosophies. Jesus loves us as we are, but loves us too much to let us stay the way we are!

LOOKING IN THE MIRROR

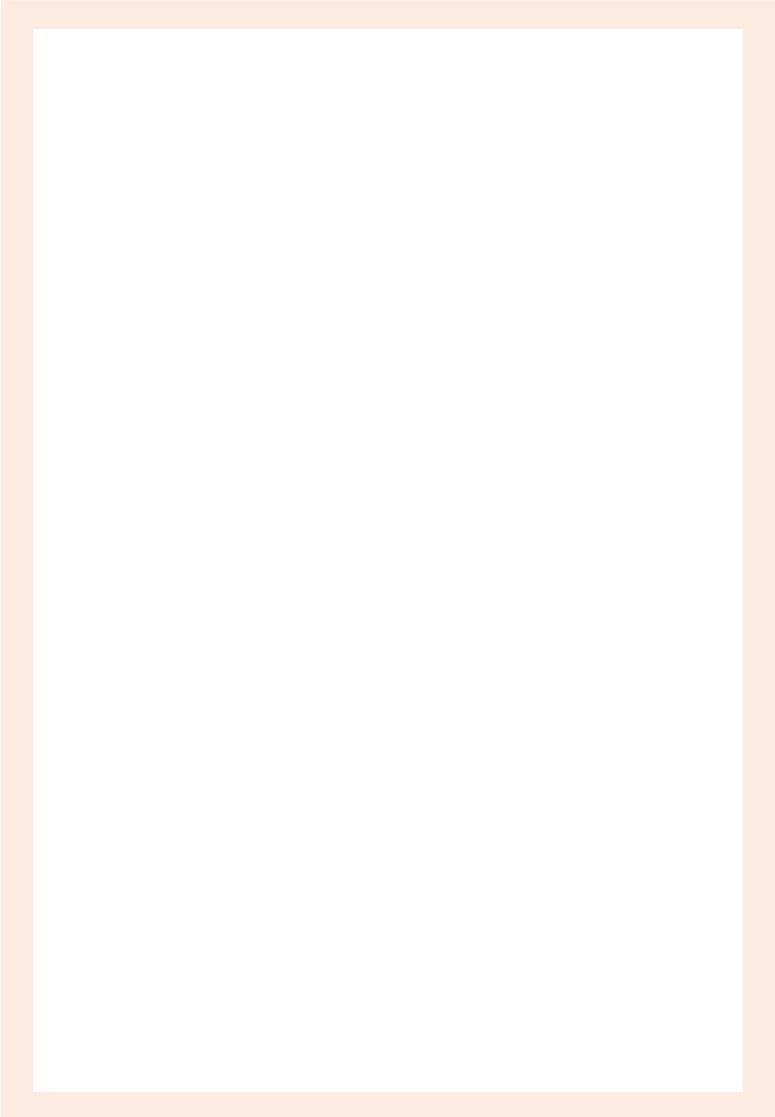
1. What are some 21st century Christian traditions that Jesus might challenge if He were here today?



2. How can we break free and help others to break free from such traditions?



NOTES







YOUR TEAM AT THE TABLE

by Josh Foliart

Founder and Director of MULTIPLi Global | Fayetteville, Arkansas

SCRIPTURE: Luke 5:27-32

Do you remember as a kid when we would gather on the playground and pick teams before starting the big game? It felt like the most important game in the world. To get picked up quickly was the best feeling in the world. However, to get picked last was a blow to your popularity quotient. This causes me to wonder how Jesus picked his team. It certainly wasn't the orthodox way to build an all star squad. It also leaves us with a powerful leadership question. How should we pick and build our teams?

I want us look at Luke 5:27-32 as a leadership text. You may have never seen it that way before, but that is exactly what it is. Jesus is forming his team. When God forms His team around us, we should take into consideration what Jesus is teaching us through Levi in this passage. Notice how Jesus leadership was almost always connected with a table.

“After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” So he left all, rose up, and followed Him. Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, “Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” (NKJV)

Jesus called Levi, a man from a particularly hated class of people, to follow Him. As a tax collector for the Romans, Levi would have suffered the scorn of the Pharisees. According to Rabbinic Judaism there was no hope for a man like Levi. He was excluded from all religious fellowship.

It is not surprising, then, that Levi wanted all his friends and fellow sinners to meet the One who set him free from hopelessness. Jesus never hesitated. He and His disciples were pleased to eat and drink with the very ones the “church crowd” avoided. How else could they share the good news of the Kingdom of God with those who needed good news the most? But let’s look at the same passage in Matthew 9:9-13. I think it will unlock something vital for us as we explore how to choose our team.

“As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew (Levi) sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him. And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire ‘ mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” (ESV)

This is a leadership passage. Jesus looks for mercy not sacrifice. He looks for people who have understood their need for mercy and have the capacity to offer that same mercy to an undeserving world. That’s Matthew’s story. That’s my story. That’s everyone’s story. That’s

what Jesus was going after in this misunderstood tax collector: Mercy. Mercy rewrote Matthew's entire story and the capacity to let mercy rewrite the story of those around us is leadership at its best.

It's not easily visible, but Matthew was writing to a Jewish audience and was appealing to His Jewish audience by referencing the Old Testament book of Hosea. A book of epic unfaithfulness and rebellion.

"For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." (Hosea 6:6, NKJV)

I can almost hear Matthew saying: "We're all unfaithful. We all need mercy!" We've all gone astray like Israel did in this famous book of unfaithfulness. The conclusion is this. We all want to receive Jesus mercy, but when it comes to offering mercy to others, that's a different story. In fact, that's a leadership story. That's the mark that Jesus looks for in his leadership team. How about you?

*"Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy."
(Matthew 5:7, ESV)*

LOOKING IN THE MIRROR

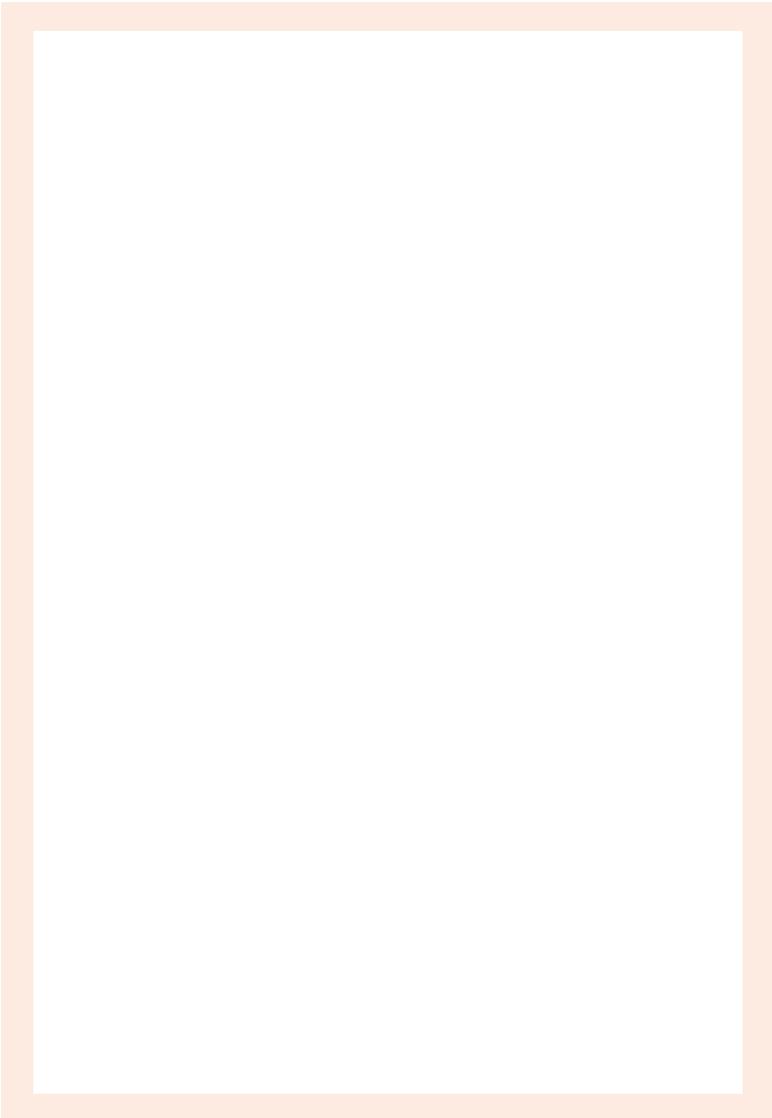
1. Is mercy something you value when you are building your team? Why or why not?



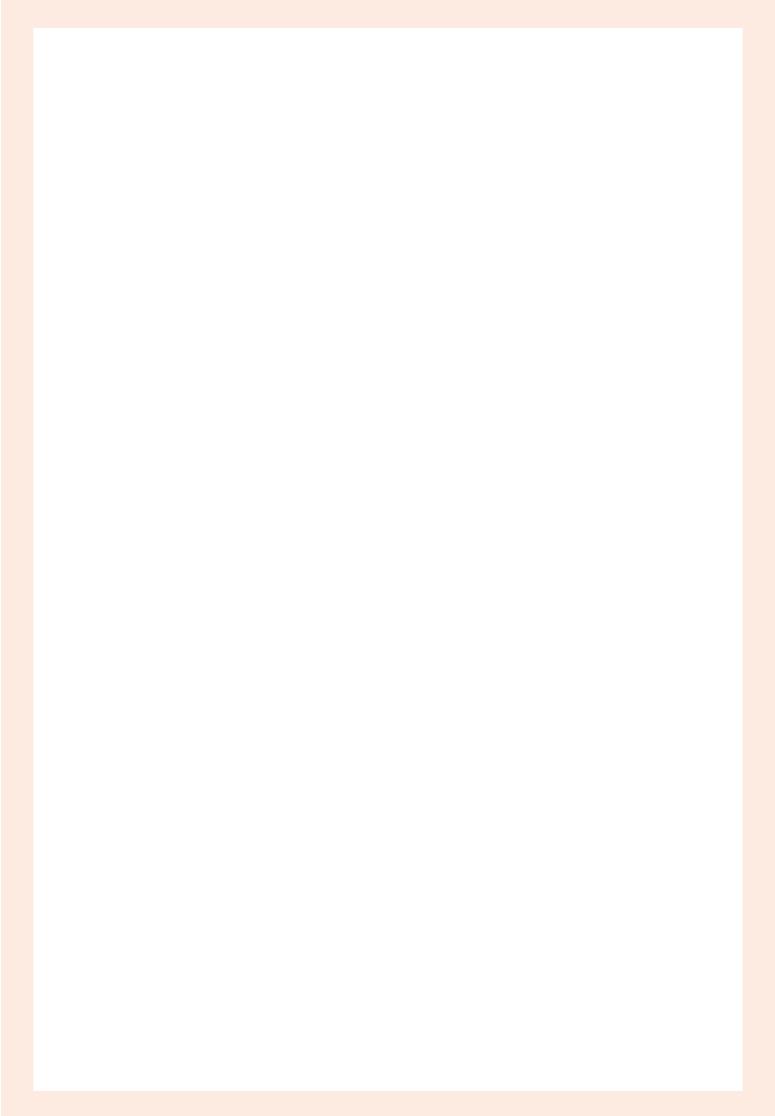
2. How would having “people who have understood their need for mercy and have the capacity to offer that same” on your leadership team change your organization?



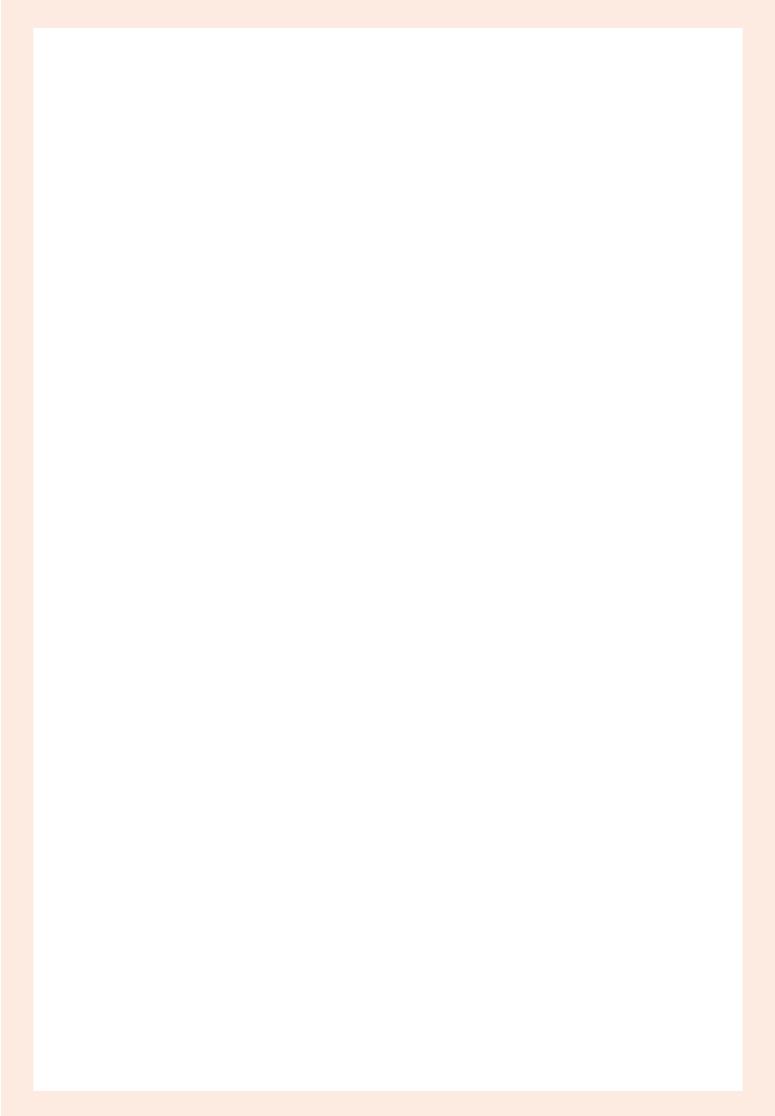
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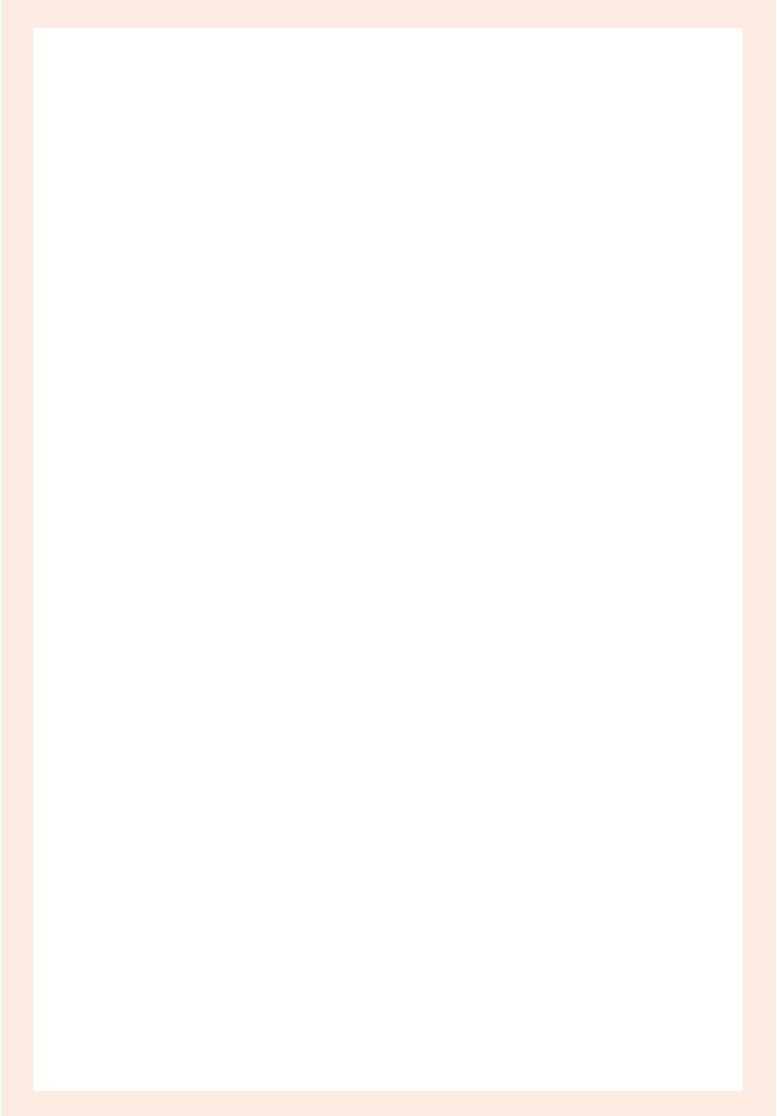
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MULTIPLi

make disciples. train leaders. plant churches.