

HOW TO ALIGN YOURSELF WITH GOD'S HEART FOR *Missions*



5-DAY DEVOTIONAL ON
LIVING A MISSIONAL LIFE

Written by Ray Noah, D. MIN

INTRODUCTION

For years, people have believed that a mission statement is important for personal success. But as a Christian, success isn't about adopting a mission statement or a set of tasks, it's about undergoing a profound change of heart, a "dislocation of the heart," that aligns with Christ's own compassion and purpose.

When we walk with Jesus and grow closer to him, we shouldn't be asking, "What's my mission?" Instead, we should be asking, "how do I get on mission with God?"

The closer we get to Jesus, the more we should align our hearts with his purpose to reach the unreached with the life-changing message of the Gospel. Our role, our mission, is God's mission—seeking and saving the lost. After all, "Lost people matter to God, so they must matter to us."

As you read through this 5-day devotional our prayer is that God would dislocate your heart for the lost and give you new eyes to see the mission fields around you.

Building His Kingdom Together,



Ray M. Noah, D. Min

CEO / Managing Director



Day One

It's Time To Personally Prioritize Reaching The Unreached

"If you will take care of the things God cares about — especially reaching the unreached with the Good News — God will take care of the things you care about."

— RAY NOAH, D. MIN —

Becoming On Mission With God // Romans 15:20-21

"My ambition has always been to preach the Good News where the name of Christ has never been heard, rather than where a church has already been started by someone else. I have been following the plan spoken of in the Scriptures, where it says, 'Those who have never been told about him will see, and those who have never heard of him will understand.'"

Consider what the famous missionary Henry Martyn said, "The spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions. The nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we become."

I thought I was intensely missionary. I grew up in the church where the occasional missionary would come, and if we were lucky, show slides of his other work in Africa, or some other far-off place that I had only heard about in geography lessons at school.

Then I grew up and became a pastor, and again, the occasional missionary would come and tell the church of what God was doing somewhere far away, and I would feel good that we were a missions church. I would even give regularly to support the church's missions effort around the world. I was content that I was a missions-minded Christian.

But that began to change. Periodically, I was sent overseas for short-term missions projects by the various churches I served, and my heart began to get reshaped by what I saw God doing among people who had never heard the name of Jesus before. The signs, wonders and miracles in the missions context (Paul talks about that in the missions context of **Romans 15:19**) blew my mind. I had never seen such things in the U.S., and experiencing it abroad, I longed to see the supernatural back home in my church, too. God was disturbing my contentedness and reshaping my heart for missions.

Then God completely dislocated my heart and gave me a real passion for missions, especially for reaching people who had never heard the Gospel of Christ—what missiologists refer to as unreached people. I have a notion now that I have become a missions-minded Christian, and I grow more intensely missionary as the days go by.

It all happened when I reluctantly got involved in a church-planting project in a remote, unreached region in Africa in 2004. I was reluctant because I knew that my involvement would require a lot of my own personal resources, and to be successful, it would require significant resources from my church. Figuring our resource pie was stretched, and limited, I secretly feared that the finances we dedicated to this project would flow away from other worthy projects; that we would simply be “robbing Peter to pay Paul.”

Then, as I was stressing over this likely outcome, something wonderful happened. God spoke to me. Not in an audible voice or through writing on the wall or some other sensational sort of way (that would have been really cool). He simply and clearly spoke to me through an undeniable and unmistakable inner impression in my spirit. Addressing my stress, he simply said, “Ray, if you will take care of the things I care about, then I will take care of the things you care about. I care about a lost world. I care about people who have never heard my name. And I want you to care about them too!”

That was good enough for me. I jumped into this project up to my eyeballs, and true to his word, God turned on a miraculous flow of resources, not only for this church planting project but for those other projects I had been so concerned about as well. Best of all, my obedience, and of those who joined me, keyed a revival in this region of Africa that was beyond anyone's wildest expectations. Now, twenty years later, the gospel has spread to unreached villages in several nations, and nearly 1.5 million believers have come to know Jesus. And the revival is showing no signs of slowing.

What God has done in Africa through this act of obedience changed my heart forever, and has given me an ever-growing, all-consuming passion for missions. I still have a passion for the local church and reaching the lost in my community (that's missions, too), but I have an added ambition now: To keep God's people focused on reaching people who have never heard the name of Jesus Christ. You see, just because a person happens to be born in an unreached part of the world shouldn't limit their access to Jesus and the blessings of his kingdom.

Reaching the unreached — that was Paul's ambition, according to **Romans 15:20**, way before it was mine. That is God's ambition, according to **Romans 15:21**, that "those who have never been told about him will see, and those who have never heard of him will understand."

I pray that you will open your heart and let God make it your ambition as well. I hope that you will travel with me down the path to becoming an intensely missionary Christian. If you will, I will make you the same promise God made me:

"If you will take care of the things God cares about—a lost world—God will take care of the things you care about: your world."

What a deal! That is an offer you shouldn't refuse.

Today's Assignment

Pray and ask God how we want you to get involved in His mission. Pray that God will open your heart and make this your ambition as well. Billions of people are depending on it!



Day Two

It's Time To Personally Prioritize Reaching The Unreached

Becoming On Mission With God // Romans 15:20

"It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ is not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation."

It's time to get your ambition on!

Ambition is something that in our day has an equally positive and negative connotation. In the negative sense, ambitious people are seen as willing to compromise, step on people, win at all costs, and be ruthlessly opportunistic to get what they want — which is usually “to the top.”

When we think of ambition in the positive sense, we prefer to speak of it in terms of passion. This sort of ambitious person is passionate; perhaps we might even call them driven. The Apostle Paul was all of those: driven, passionate, and ambitious in the best sense of the word.

Paul's passionate driven-ness was a holy ambition. It was holy because Paul clearly understood that his calling did not originate within himself, but it was from God: “...because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God...” (Rom 15:15-16) Paul had been given

a divine purpose, it was that very purpose that inexorably drove Paul toward its accomplishment.

Furthermore, Paul was ambitious for all the glory to go directly to God: “Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done...” **(Rom 15:17-18)** Paul did not want achieve fame for himself, he wanted only to make God’s name famous among the Gentiles. That’s why Paul was dogged in his determination to take the gospel to Gentiles who had never heard, refusing to co-opt another preacher’s labor, but choosing rather to prophetically plant where no preacher had been. **(Rom 15:20-22)**

Finally, what elevated Paul’s ambition from merely human to altogether holy was the fact that it was authenticated by the power of the Holy Spirit through signs and wonders: “by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit.” **(Rom 15:19)** God had called Paul to do what he was doing, Paul passionately did what he did for the glory of God alone, and that was the perfect recipe for the release of the divine power that enabled Paul to do what only God could do.

What has God done through you lately? You know, God wants to give you a holy ambition for great things, too — supernatural things! That ambition is there, wrapped and waiting in heaven to be released to you. But God won’t waste one ounce of holy ambition on those who would use it for their own gain. However, for those who will open their hearts to being used by God and then doggedly dedicate themselves to be used for God’s glory alone, God will release supernatural supply to do through them what only God can do. And that, my friend, is the best kind of ambition; far better, more rewarding, and soul-satisfying than any human ambition — even the most altruistic ambition. It is holy ambition.

Do you have it? If not, it’s time to get your ambition on! So sanctify your motives, open up your heart, and get ready for God to use you to achieve some glory for him!

Today’s Assignment

Spend time with God this week and ask him to show you what he desires to do through you. Then ask him to show you what is holding that divine plan back, then ask him to remove the blockage. Finally, ask him to fill you with consuming ambition for what he has revealed to you.



Day Three

You Are God's Harvester of Souls Lost People Matter to God - They Should Matter to Us, Too!

"If lost people matter deeply to God—enough to send His only Son to die for their redemption—they ought to matter deeply to us as well."

— RAY NOAH, D. MIN —

Becoming On Mission With God // Matthew 9:37-3

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest"

This verse represents a clear view into the compassionate heart of a seeking God, and more than anything, it reveals the compelling core of his very being.

Moreover, Jesus's words remind us that there is a very real harvest of human souls that will spend somewhere in eternity—either heaven or hell. And being Lord of the harvest, it tells us that the gathering in of these unsaved souls is God's primary business, if you will.

Finally, it tells us that we are those he has brought into his field to do the harvesting of these souls. In other words, you are God's harvester!

All that to say, lost people must matter to us because they matter to God!

John 3:16, the most compelling of all the verses in the Bible, is compelling for a reason. It reminds us, in no uncertain terms, that the salvation of the lost, both near and far, both next door and across the ocean, is the driving conviction of God's being:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Now if lost people matter that deeply to God—enough to send His only Son to die for us—they ought to matter deeply to us as well. And that is a critical issue since, as Christian author Jacquelyn Heasley puts it, "How we believe God perceives people determines how we will respond to them."

Every time you see the face of another human being, you're seeing a soul that's so loved by God that he sent his Son to die for their redemption—illegals crossing the southern border, the homeless camping along the interstate, anarchist breaking windows downtown, your next-door neighbor who won't cut his grass. They matter to a missionary God and crossing international borders as well as our own comfort to reach them with his love is called missions. So, they need to matter deeply to us as well.

So reaching them with the Good News of salvation and the free gift of eternal life is the mission of God that has been assigned to you and me. In that sense, you and I are missionaries—albeit to our next-door neighbor, or to our classmate at the next desk over, or to our coworker in the cubicle next to us.

May I implore you to not only memorize this verse this week but to see it from a whole new perspective from now on? Let it remind you of the ripe harvest all around you. Let it give you a clear and constant view into the very heart of the seeking Father. And let it shake you to the core that God is depending on you to be the gatherer in his great harvest of souls.

May this be the compelling call that transforms you into a Christ-follower who has become intensely missionary. Henry Martyn, the nineteenth-century Anglican missionary to India who died, incidentally, at the age of thirty-one bringing the Gospel to Iran, said: “The spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions. The nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we become.”

God help you, and God help me, to become intensely missionary!

Today's Assignment

Perhaps a prayer today is in order. Ask God to help you to see lost people as he does. Ask him to give you his heart for those who don't know him and are, therefore, headed for a Christless eternity. And ask him to use you to influence someone to him today. And remember, he hears your prayers.



Day Four

Job Description for Jesus' Disciples They Reflect and They Replicate

"To convert a soul to Jesus simply begins the process of discipleship. Conversion is the first step; discipleship is the journey."

— RAY NOAH, D. MIN —

Becoming On Mission With God // Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

What do true disciples do? Two things, actually: They reflect, and they replicate.

First, authentic disciples become like the Master. They fully devote themselves to his life, and they fully obey his teachings. They become like Jesus in thought, word, and deed to the point where his very being is reflected in the essential quality of their being. The Master becomes the sum and substance of their lives. Only by the kind of transformation

where the Master is fundamentally reflected from center to circumference in their lives can Christ's disciples in turn "go and make [other] disciples." Only then can they teach others to "observe all that [the Master] has commanded."

That is what it means to be truly Christian. Being truly Christian means being an authentic disciple. One cannot happen without the other—Christianity means discipleship; discipleship means Christianity. Being either is not just in name, it is in the reflection of the Master in the life of the disciple. Calling oneself a disciple is simply wishful thinking without doing the things of discipleship and being in essence the reflection of the Master. Call it what you will, anything less is nothing more than inauthentic discipleship, non-Christianity, and a false religion.

Second, authentic disciples replicate the life of the Master through their lives in the lives of others. In other words, they reproduce. Barren discipleship is non-discipleship. True disciples go with the message, bearing the life of the One they reflect and persuading others to follow Jesus.

Disciples don't just win converts to Christianity, they make other disciples in the way of the Master. To convert a soul to Jesus simply begins the process of discipleship. Conversion is the first step; discipleship is the journey. True conversion that begins the journey of authentic discipleship requires the same full devotion to the Master's life and the same full obedience to his teaching that took place in the first disciple. The Master's life is replicated in the disciple, who in turn replicates the Master's life in the convert, who then, in turn, replicates the Master's life in still others.

Discipleship, then, comes full circle and is proven authentic when the Master's life is replicated in the disciple, who in turn replicates the Master's life in the convert, who then, in turn, replicates the Master's life in still others.

So, here is the real question in all of this: Are you a true disciple? The answer is easy: If you are reflecting and replicating the life of the Master, you're in pretty good shape.

If you aren't, you need to go back and have a serious conversation — should I say, “conversion” — with the Master. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer observed, “Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.”

Today's Assignment

Let me suggests that you offer this prayer if you are serious about being a true disciple of Christ: “Jesus, you said we cannot truly call you Lord unless we do the things you said we should do. With all of my heart, I want to be authentic when I call you Lord. Help me to give you my full devotion and complete obedience. Make me a true disciple.”



Day Five

The Best Investment You Will Ever Make Now is the Time to Get Missional

“There’s never been a greater opportunity for return on your missions investment than right now—praying for missions, giving, going on a mission and, living a missional life.”

— RAY NOAH, D. MIN —

Becoming On Mission With God // John 4:34-38

Jesus said to them, “My food is doing the will of him who sent me and finishing the work he has given me. Don’t you say, ‘Four months more and then comes the harvest’? But I tell you to open your eyes and look to the field—they are gleaming white, all ready for the harvest! The reaper is already being rewarded and getting in a harvest for eternal life so that both the sower and reaper may be glad together. For in this harvest, the old saying comes true, ‘One man sows and another reaps.’ I have sent you to reap a harvest for which you never labored; other men have worked hard and you have reaped the results of their labors.”

We all too frequently wake up to headlines that scream, “World stock markets plunged and Wall Street was due to suffer heavy losses on Monday after ...” followed by a description of the crisis du jour.

Obviously, your money is not as safe as you'd like it to be. But Jesus spoke of an investment you can make that will yield never-ending, ever-increasing returns. He promised that those who give financially to missions will get in on an eternal harvest that is unprecedented in history. If there was ever a time, it's now to repurpose your life, especially your finances for greater missional engagement. Jesus says to you, "open your eyes and look to the field—they are gleaming white, all ready for the harvest! The reaper is already being rewarded and getting in a harvest for eternal life." (**John 4:35-36**)

Yes, now is the time! It's true, there has never been a greater opportunity for return on your missions' investment than right now—your investment of praying for missions, giving to missions, encouraging missionaries, going on a mission and in a way that encompasses everything about you, living a missions driven life. And by "missions", I mean anything that has to do with proclaiming Christ in places with no sustainable Christian witness to those who haven't received the Good News yet and influencing them into God's eternal kingdom.

That's what Jesus is prophetically saying in **John 4:34-38**. In verse 35, he pleads with his disciples: "Open your eyes; see the fields! Now is the time—they're ripe for harvest." And notice how he frames his missions appeal in terms of return on investment in verse 36: "The reaper will get rewarded now, plus bring in a harvest that's eternal." (JBP)

As we sit at the end of the age, the evidence shouts that this is a "kairos" moment. "Kairos" is the Greek word used in the New Testament for a God-opportunity; "chronos", on the other hand, is the word used for actual time, that is, chronological time. This is that kairos time of which Jesus spoke where those who pray for, go on and give to missions will get in on an eternal harvest that is unprecedented in history.

If there was ever a time, it's now to repurpose your life for greater missional engagement. If you've not, get all in, make the change to go all out for missions. If you already are engaged in missions, recalibrate for more. Now is the time! Don't miss out! As you correctly absorb John 4, there are three unavoidable convictions you will lay claim to in relation to the huge and ripened harvest that is our present world:

First, you will become convinced that doing missions is your divine mandate. In verse 34, Jesus directly connected reaching this foreign seeker (the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar) with both the will and the work of God: “What keeps me going is to do the will of the One who sent me, finishing the work he started.” (MSG)

I realize that what I’m talking about—dedicating your time, energy and money...or more of it—may not be too comfortable for you. Unless you are convinced of what Jesus was convinced of—that this is the will and work of God—any call to commit your resources of time and energy will seem pushy about this. But sincerely pray about it. Don’t do or not do it because a pastor or missionary is pressuring you. Open your heart to God, and simply ask, “God, help me to see the harvest—and what you would have me to do about it!”

Second, you will become convinced that doing missions brings the deepest satisfaction. In verse 32, Jesus said, “this is my nourishment!” It has been my experience that missional investment and involvement satisfies a core desire like no other. In an age that deeply longs for satisfaction but can never seem to really find it, I can promise you this: what deeply satisfied Jesus’ soul will be that which can only and fully satisfy your soul!

Third, you will become convinced that the missional sacrifice of others demands your best sacrifice. Notice verse 38: “I’m sending you to reap what you’ve not worked for. Others have done the hard work, now you’ll reap the benefits of their labor.” The investment of those who’ve gone before us demands that we do no less.

Think of the comfort missionaries have given up over the centuries to take Jesus to unreached people. It is the story of sacrifice! They died—often literally—to our version of the good life to bring the Good News so others can live.

James Calvert, in the 1800’s, shipped off to go as a missionary to the cannibals on the Fiji Islands. As they neared the islands, the captain tried to dissuade him back.”You’ll lose your life and the lives of those with you if you go among these savages.” To that, Calvert replied, “Captain, we died before we came here.”

To Calvert—and other missionaries, I think they would all say, it was no sacrifice; it was our nourishment; it was our calling. We would do it all over again.

When you consider missionaries, starting with Jesus clear down to those serving in far away and difficult places in the world today, their sacrifice is best honored by your sacrifice! Mine, too! Missions is your calling! It's your privilege. It will be your nourishment! And in eternity, it will prove to be the best investment you ever made.

Today's Assignment

Your assignment this week is to give an offering to a missions organization. It is not the only way to be missional, it is a good start, because as Jesus said, “where your treasure is there your heart will be also.” **(Matthew 6:21)**



WE BELIEVE WHAT YOU BELIEVE:

Where a person is born shouldn't limit
their access to *Jesus*.

When you support the mission of Petros Network you are training and equipping indigenous leaders to transform communities among the unreached and underserved.

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Petros Networks's mission is to strategically introduce Jesus to the unreached world. Learn more at petrosnetwork.org



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