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Pathways to Discipleship Matter

Wade Allen

Lead Pastor

Growing up in the 70's and 80's, churches (and Christianity) looked a lot different than they do today. In some ways, it seemed better back in the day, but not when it came to discipleship!

Most Gen-X believers will remember the old chorus that said, "I don't wanna be, I don't wanna be a casual Christian. I don't wanna live, I don't wanna live a lukewarm life." When I surrendered my life to the Lord, this song became my anthem! I learned to play the guitar because I wanted to be able to play this song.

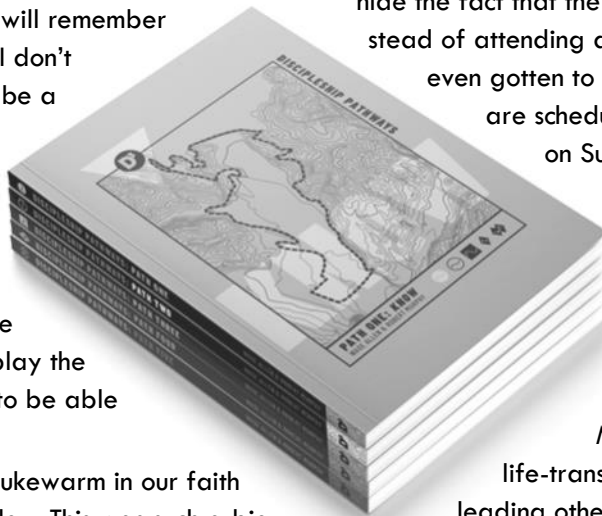
This concept of being lukewarm in our faith was a huge issue in that day. This was such a big issue because there were so many people who were nothing more than social Christians—attending church for networking opportunities and to adhere to social norms.

In those decades, church attendance was the barometer for measuring faithfulness to God; and discipleship was relegated to the area of Bible knowledge. Discipleship was more about

information rather than life transformation. As a result, I had a lot of Bible knowledge but I wasn't living my life for the Lord. I wasn't yielding my will to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

I don't have to tell you this, but times have changed! It is no longer a social expectation to attend church on the weekends. People no longer hide the fact that they're doing other things instead of attending a local worship gathering. It's even gotten to the point that youth leagues are scheduling practices and games on Sundays. That was unheard of back in my day! There is no more social pressure to appear Christian. Now, it seems that people who proclaim to be Christians are more serious about it!

My burden for experiencing life-transforming discipleship and leading others in that process really started during my first pastorate in Texas. I started the new millennia (January 2000) focused on creating a tool to help make disciples who were authentic followers of Christ. When we moved to Southeast Asia about two years later, I was faced with the challenge of creating a process for discipleship that was easily reproducible



Words Really Do Matter

Ron Fields

Pastor of Senior Adults and Care Ministries

Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me. Do you remember hearing that?

Words we speak are very powerful. They may hurt. They may make us feel good. I have met many who shared they were hurt by words spoken whether intentionally or unintentionally.

However, a kind word, spoken with a smile, is very welcome.

In the Book of James, we read that

the tongue is

associated with words and that the

tongue is a powerful instrument that can harm or heal. He also warns to be swift to hear but slow to speak. He recognizes impulsive speech may cause great harm.

Some people defend impulsive speech with the rationale, "Well, I just say what is on my mind!" But that is just the reason why we should be slow to speak. Our words should edify one another rather than tear down. Paul tells us in Colossians 4:6 "Let your speech be always with grace..." Proverbs 15:1 "A soft answer turns away wrath."

Jesus' instructions to His followers were "You shall be witnesses..." Due to the spoken word His followers were soon described as "Those who turned Jerusalem upside down!" Though we want our lives to be a witness, there are times we must speak. May our words be approved by Christ and used to further His kingdom.



WORDS
HAVE
POWER

Attitudes and Actions Matter


John O'Connor

Pastor of Community Engagement

If you are like me, the end of the summer has been crazy busy. Each week seems to be adding more tasks than is feasible to accomplish, and those tasks don't go away. They just bleed to the next week and then I'm even farther behind than the week before. In fact the reason this letter is late is my fault. My bad. These feelings of being overwhelmed and anxious led me to this passage.



The easiest way for Satan to keep us from worshiping God daily is to keep us busy. When we focused on the mounds of tasks that aren't getting done, we seldomly remember to Rejoice, to Pray, to Give Thanks. When we are daily being faithful to these things, our public worship will be enhanced, dealing with difficult people will be easier, and our witness will be richer. How are we going to draw people's attention to Love a God we never think about? It is the will of God in Christ Jesus that we always Rejoice, Pray, and Give Thanks for everything.

Editor's Note: Pastor John took full credit for this newsletter going out late, which is not entirely true. Pastor Wade was still working on his article when John finished his 

What Matters Most in Life

David McEven

Pastor of Family and Worship

Last month, some of our students encountered a significant milestone. Not only did they start a new school year, but the sixth graders were promoted from Club 267 to Temple Student Ministry on Wednesday nights. It was big change but the students did great and it was exciting to welcome some new faces!

My daughter also reached an important milestone last month. She turned 5 years old. From now on, she'll have to use all five fingers to tell people how old she is and next year, she'll have to start using BOTH hands! That's wild!

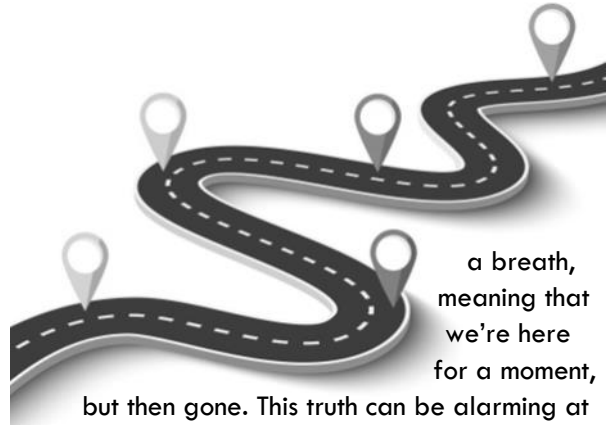
It's often during big moments like these that I find myself wondering whether or not I'm investing my life in what matters most. Maybe you're like me; you're aware that life is short but unfortunately, you're not always attuned to just how quickly time passes.

The Bible is keen on reminding us of the brevity of life. Psalm 39:5 compares man's life to

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in a poverty-stricken country. Working together with my fellow missionary, Robert Murphy, we put together a set of simple study guides that pointed people to the Word of God as the source of truth for this life.

Now over twenty years later, these simple studies are still pointing people to God's Word. Several years ago—after discipling several men in our church with the original studies—I started a journey of reformatting these discussion-based, small group Bible study guides. My goal was to create a tool that could be used by an individual as a daily, "personal study" and design it in a way



a breath, meaning that we're here for a moment, but then gone. This truth can be alarming at first but it's present in our Bibles for a reason. It's not meant to drive us to despair, but to get us to consider our ways and spur us on to intentional obedience.

So, what about you? How are you spending your days? Is your relationship with Christ penciled into your daily schedule? Do you step away from your phone or work to spend focused time with your family? If not, ask God to help you make a change and reveal to you what needs to take priority in your life. Ask Him to teach you to number our days that we may make the best use of the time God provides. (Psalm 90:12)

that it could be used in the context of a discipling relationship with others.

I am delighted to announce that this process is complete and I have self-published this discipleship tool as a series of five workbooks. I have talked a lot over the years about the need for disciples who make disciple-making disciples. This new resource will help you be that disciple-maker!

So, grab a couple of friends and join in this journey of discovery through the pages of Scripture as the Spirit guides you into the truth of His Word (John 16:13) to bring about the transformation of your heart and mind to be more and more like Christ every day (Romans 8:29; 12:2).

