Week 1: Life On Mission: The Big Picture

Introduction
The heartbeat of God is that He would be worshiped among all peoples. The writer of the Psalms conveys this sentiment when he said of God, “I will be exalted in the earth!” God desires that all people worship Him and give Him the glory that is due His name. For this to happen, our lives must be lived and leveraged for His glory. Psalm 46:10 - “... I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth.”

1. We’re Called to be Everyday Missionaries
The Great Commission is not for a select few; it is for the entire church and is as relevant today as when Christ spoke them to the disciples before ascending to Heaven. Everyday missionaries are those who practice a life on mission where God has placed them. When we choose to join God on His mission through His church, we dare to be the everyday missionaries He has called us to be.

If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, your life has a mission.

God has a purpose and plan for you. In fact, He wants to do more “in” you and “through” you than you can even imagine. But it is not about us—it’s about Him. Everything we do—our jobs, our parenting, our life’s mission—should be done with the intention of bringing glory to His name.

Ephesians 3:20-21 — “Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

1 Corinthians 10:31— “… Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for God’s glory.” (ESV)

Living for God’s glory and joining God in His mission is not about adding activities to your already chaotic life. Life on mission is about intersecting gospel intentionally into our everyday routines. Of course, if God calls accordingly, that might result in adding new elements into your schedule. God drives the mission.

A weak gospel foundation can lead to fragile mission practices. It is important to remember these three things:
(1.) Ministry was never just meant for “paid professionals”— every Christian is called to make disciples.
(2.) Growing in knowledge about God through books, seminars and studying theology don’t equate to actual ministry and living on mission with God unless we are using what we learn in conversations with non-believers.
(3.) Understanding the biblical foundation of missions and ministry is essential.

Too often, people understand the “why” because of familiarity with all things “church,” but don’t understand the biblical foundations. They dig deep into the gospel but never apply it. Or, they eagerly engage in ministry and missions without knowing why it matters.
Our roles as everyday missionaries is to introduce people to Jesus, disciple them to become like Christ, and teach them to repeat the process with others. Our individual missions are driven by the truth of the gospel and defined by the mission of God. God’s mission is to take what is broken and redeem it by making it new. God invites us to follow Him into a broken world!

2. Our Current Reality
It doesn’t take a lot to convince us that things are bleak. Just turn on the news or take a stroll through the downtown area.

The Mission Field of America:
We have historically been a country that sends missionaries to the nations who haven’t heard the gospel but now, North America is in decline. While North America was once the center of evangelical Christianity, that seems to be shifting to Asia, Africa and Central America now.

Of America’s 316 million people evangelicals account for about 22 to 28 million; 93% are non-evangelicals.

While some individual churches are growing, evangelical numbers as a whole are shrinking. At the same time, population is growing even faster now than during the Baby Boom. Entire cities that were once vibrant, gospel-transformed places are now spiritually boarded-up wastelands that are far from Jesus.

Declining numbers can be frustrating but we must remember that our God is still God. His desire for movement through His church can trump the current realities. Just as God showed Ezekiel a vision: a valley of dry bones—bones that were once full of life and vitality laying dormant and dusty—and just as he breathed life into a situation where death seemed imminent, God can still do that today in the North American church.

Ezek. 37:1-3: “The hand of the Lord was on me, and He brought me out by His Spirit and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them. There were a great many of them on the surface of the valley, and they were very dry. Then He said to me, ‘Son of man can these bones live?’”

When things seem bleak and hopeless, God shows up and breathes life into our situation.

3. The Mission of God
God has always been about forming a gospel-driven people for a gospel-impacted world.

In the Old Testament, Adam and Eve choose self-interest over relationship with God. Their sin brought about deception, disobedience and even murder. Later, God chose Abram (whom he later re-named Abraham) to be a part of His redeeming mission, bringing change that would make a great nation and bless the peoples on earth. Genesis 12:1-3: “The Lord said to Abram: ‘Go out from your land, your relatives, and
your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you. I will curse those who treat you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

In the New Testament we see that God choose to use an ordinary man like Abraham to bring about change, but that Abraham’s bloodline also led to the ultimate change-agent: God in the flesh, Jesus.

God’s plan culminated in Jesus—God in human flesh, sent on a rescue mission to reconcile the world to God through the cross and resurrection.

The current reality of our world is certainly motivation for becoming an everyday missionary, but the ultimate motivation is God Himself. Just as he freed us from sin and transformed our lives, we are compelled to be right where He is—right in the middle of rescue missions. When we are reconciled to God, we are commissioned to become missionaries along side of Him as part of His family, adopted as His sons and daughters. When we comprehend how good the Good News of Jesus really is, we will respond to God’s invitation to join Him where He’s at work!

4. Embracing God’s Mission
God is on a mission to redeem and reconcile people to Himself. This mission sweeps both history and the globe and uses ordinary people just like us. Just as Jesus went all over Galilee preaching the good news of the kingdom, we are call to do the same today.

Matthew 4:23: “Jesus was going all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom …”

If we’re honest we may admit that we don’t feel much like we’re a part of God’s grand mission. We get bogged down in the everyday details of our lives instead of the everyday mission of God. Sometimes we don’t embrace the mission of God because we have our own mission and agenda in life. We decide what’s meaningful or worthwhile and live accordingly. We may pursue entertainment or comfort. Or, perhaps, security or wealth. Still others may be focused on climbing the corporate ladder or becoming the most respected mom in the neighborhood. The truth is, we like to be the boss of our own lives.

We think we could never be like Adam and Eve, forsaking God’s kingdom for our own self-interest, yet in one way or another, we’re all guilty of not submitting to the authority of God as King.

Conclusion
Every life on mission matters.
We live in a culture that dictates cultural norms. But as kingdom citizens, we know God’s truths are real and can turn the world upside-down.
Culture tells us: Be first.

God says: The last will be first and the first will be last. (Matt. 20:16)

Culture tells us: Step over others to exalt yourself.

God says: Humble yourself to be exalted. (Matt. 23:12, James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:6)

Culture says: Do whatever makes you look best.

God says: Take the worst seat at the table instead of the best. (Luke 14:8)

Culture says: Your life is what’s most important.

God says: Consider others better than yourself. (Phil. 2:3-4)

Culture says: Always get or do what you want.

God says: Die to your own desires. (Luke 9:23)

Culture says: Take care of yourself first and foremost.

God says: Whoever loses his life will find it. (Matt. 16:25)

Culture says: Maybe forgive, but don’t forget.

God says: Love and pray for your enemies. (Matt. 5:44)

Culture says: Have nothing to do with those who are against you.

God says: Bless those who persecute you. (Rom. 12:14)

Culture says: No one tells you what to do.

God says: Go further than what you are asked. (Matt. 5:41)

In God’s kingdom true fulfillment is found in sacrifice. True identity is found as we lose ourselves in Christ. Our deepest questions are answered outside of ourselves. The ultimate aim of our lives is to bring glory to God because every single life lived on mission matters!

Additional Option
Incorporate the story of Stephanie Copenhaver into your sermon. This is available under God Stories: Illustrations of God at Work through everyday missionaries, in the resource section.

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LIFE ON MISSION
Building Gospel Foundations
WEEK 2
Week 2: Life On Mission: Building a Gospel Foundation

Introduction:
A life on mission is a calling of abandonment; the willingness to take on the mind of Jesus and set aside our old life and our preferences and follow God—going wherever He asks and doing whatever He asks us to do—even when it doesn’t make sense or doesn’t seem like it will be successful according to the world’s standards. That means holding our own plans and ideals loosely.

1. The Gospel Must Be Foundational
The Gospel is the announcement of good news that transforms a life! It is the starting point, the sustaining point and the finishing point to living a life on mission. An everyday missionary who is not grounded in the gospel is no missionary at all because he or she does not have good news to proclaim.

Being an everyday missionary is impossible without a solid gospel foundation. The gospel is like a bungee cord that keeps the jumper connected to life. Just as a jumper cannot leap off the platform without being securely fastened to the bungee cord, a follower of Christ cannot spring into missions without a gospel foundation. Without a gospel “cord,” our missions efforts will be in vain.

The Gospel is not something we simply “get,” it is something we grow deeper in throughout our lives. If the gospel is not genuinely the foundation and motivation of our mission, we will likely falter and fall astray.

Everyday missionaries with a solid gospel foundation understand that missions is not a periodic mission service project or a task to be taken care of by a professional church staff, it’s living intentionally on mission every single day of the week. When taking on the risk of living selflessly and intentionally each day, it is the gospel truth and understanding that Jesus is already our great reward that serves as motivation.

I Corinthians 15: 1-4 “I want to clarify for you the gospel I proclaimed to you; you received it and have taken your stand on it. You are also saved by it, if you hold to the message I proclaimed to you—unless you believed for no purpose. For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

2. Spiritual Maturity is Essential
Our world doesn’t need more people who know more facts about God, but rather people who are falling deeper in love with who God is.

The recipients of the book of Hebrews were told in chapter 5, verses 11-14, that even though they should be teachers by now, they still needed someone to teach them about God. Instead of being able to eat solid food, the writer said that like infants who couldn’t feed themselves, they still needed milk. This Scripture prompts an alarming image of an older child or adult who still drinks formula from a bottle.
Hebrews 5:11-14: “We have a great deal to say about this, and it’s difficult to explain, since you have become too lazy to understand. Although by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the basic principles of God’s revelation again. You need milk, not solid food. Now everyone who lives on milk is inexperienced with the message about righteousness, because he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature—for those whose senses have been trained to distinguish between good and evil.”

One truth from Hebrews 5 is that although there should be a correlation between the amount of time a person has known Jesus and their spiritual maturity, it doesn’t always work that way. There are many believers whose maturity falls way behind their spiritual age.

Starting at where people are spiritually, we have to go back to the basics of Christianity to make sure that believers understand:

**The Supremacy of God**
God is King and able to do what He says He will do. God is at the center of His mission. If we believe that God is supreme, then we are in a good position to mature spiritually. Our desires and decisions will be submissive to Him, fostering a lifetime of repentance and realigning our hearts towards His heart and Kingdom.

**The Sovereignty of God**
God is sovereign and involved in every aspect of His creation from providing food for us, (Matt. 6:11) to knowing the number of days we will live. (Psalm 139) All of our talents are a result of God’s goodness to us. (I Cor. 4:7)

Everyday missionaries must understand that God is at work in the world and we are asked to respond to in obedience to that work. It is not up to us to determine the focus of our mission; it is up to us to follow God. As long we follow in obedience, we are in the center of God’s will. Our everyday mission can be messy. Some days will be hard and not go as planned. It may seem as though we misinterpreted God’s plan and want to give up. But it is in those moments, if we are faithful, we can trust we are right where God wants us to be. Experiencing joy in the midst of trails is a sign of spiritual maturity. We can experience joy because we know that He is faithful to deliver on His promises.

James 1:2: “Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials ...”

**The Love of God**
God is loving. He created mankind in His image. And even though we brought sin into the world by our rebellious acts, God still loved us. Because of His holiness, He had every right to banish man from the face of the earth, but He didn’t. In a mysterious act of grace, He chose to have mercy on His people and pursue a relationship with them. In the Old Testament this relationship manifested itself in God’s covenant with Israel. In the New Testament, the covenantal relationship with Israel came to completion through Christ’s work on the cross—not just for the people of Israel, but for all people.
Christ who knew no sin became sin for all people. He took upon Himself God’s wrath which was intended for us. This was His greatest act of love toward His creation.

The gospel doesn’t just free us, it changes us. When our lives are molded by the Holy Spirit, we will see the fruits of the spirit as described in Galatians. When we walk with Jesus, we consistently develop more and more of these characteristics.

Galatians 5: 22-25: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faith, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, we must also follow the Spirit.”

Many define spiritual maturity by how much knowledge a person has about God. However, knowledge does not equal spiritual maturity. Humility, obedience and mercy are more closely tied to maturity.

3. Biblical Community is Necessary
Everyday missionaries need one another to carry out the mission of God. As believers we may not be from the same bloodline, but we are to share in the truth that we are blood-bought and adopted into a family with God Himself as our Father. We are to create a picture of biblical community; working together so that others see a clear portrait of who God can be as their Father.

Ephesians 2: 19-22 “So then you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints, and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. The whole building, being put together by God, grows into a holy sanctuary in the Lord. You also are being built together for God’s dwelling in the Spirit.”

God never intended us to live out the Christian life alone. Everyday missionaries weave biblical community into the fabric of their everyday living. Together as believers we operate as a picture of gospel transformation to the world.

Here are some characteristics of people who are connected to biblical community:
- They are honest and transparent about their struggles with sin (James 5:16)
- They gracefully confront sin in other believers and humbly accept correction rought by others (Gal. 6:1-2)
- They willingly sacrifice to help others carry their burdens (Gal. 6:2)
- They celebrate each individual and see the value of how God has used their life experiences to further His kingdom. (Rom. 12:6-8)
- They practice hospitality that nurtures relationships (Heb. 13:2)

4. Committing to Intentional Discipleship
Everyday missionaries are committed to making disciples that make disciples.

Our role as everyday missionaries is to introduce people to Christ, actively be a part of their journey to become like Christ and to teach them to do the same with others.
We are to make disciples who multiply: disciples who make disciples.

While on earth Jesus offered a clear explanation about His role and our role in the Kingdom. Jesus promised to build the Church.

Matthew 16:18: “I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the forces of Hades will not overpower it.”

As for us, we need to focus on the instruction that Jesus gave to His disciples—and ultimately all believers.

Matthew 28:19-20: “Go ... and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you.“

**Conclusion**

If you want people around you to live on mission, then you must live on mission. If you want people around you to walk in humility, then you must seek to walk in humility.

As we pursue God’s mission, we must be willing to throw aside our personal wants and desires and take on the mind of Christ each and every day as we follow Him obediently. We must ground ourselves in the gospel as we study Scripture and apply it to our lives as we pursue spiritual growth and maturity.

We must surround ourselves with biblical community, investing in relationships around us and applying God’s love and forgiveness to our relationships. Finally, we must disciple others remembering that discipleship happens as we watch people and imitate them and as others watch and imitate us. Just as we have been served by following those who are more mature, we have the great task of helping those who are behind us to take the next steps towards a deeper relationship with Jesus.

**Additional Option**

Use the story of Jeff Bodziony, available under God Stories: Illustrations of God at Work through everyday missionaries.

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Week 3: Life On Mission: Real Life Faith

Introduction

Everyday missionaries don’t just sit around reflecting on the gospel in a quiet room all day. They live with an urgency to live out their faith in real life. They know it is not enough to have a biblical foundation, they must also have strong mission practices.

People who live on mission are always on the move toward others. The life of Jesus, as well as the ministry of Paul are good examples of this. They didn’t wait for the world to come to them; like them, we must seek and find people who have needs.

Mark 5:1-20 “Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the region of the Gerasenes. As soon as He got out of the boat, a man with an unclean spirit came out of the tombs and met Him. He lived in the tombs. No one was able to restrain him anymore—even with chains—because he often had been bound with shackles and chains, but had snapped off the chains and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him. And always, night and day, he was crying out among the tombs and in the mountains and cutting himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and knelt down before Him. And he cried out with a loud voice, “What do You have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You before God, don’t torment me!” For He had told him, ‘Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!’ ‘What is your name?’ He asked him. ‘My name is Legion,’ he answered Him, ‘because we are many.’ And he kept begging Him not to send them out of the region. Now a large herd of pigs was there, feeding on the hillside. The demons begged Him, ‘Send us to the pigs, so we may enter them.’ And He gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs, and the herd of about 2,000 rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned there. The men who tended them ran off and reported it in the town and the countryside, and people went to see what had happened. They came to Jesus and saw the man who had been demon-possessed by the legion, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. The eyewitnesses described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and told about the pigs. Then they began to beg Him to leave their region. As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed kept begging Him to be with him. But He would not let him; instead, He told him, ‘Go back home to your own people, and report to them how much the Lord has done for you and how He has had mercy on you.’ So he went out and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and they were all amazed.”

Jesus intentionally went to this man who was an outcast from his community. He had compassion on a man that society had written off and ultimately transformed his life.

Living our lives on mission requires us to be willing to follow Jesus’ example and go to the “other side.” The people who need our help are not just going to show up on our doorstep; we have to identify where they are and start moving toward them. We have to invest in the lives of others as we intentionally join God where He is at work. We must also invite people into disciple-making relationships and then actively participate in equipping and developing believers to increase disciple-making.
1. Know Your Neighbor
By nature, we are all self-absorbed. It’s easy to become consumed with ourselves, thinking only about how situations will affect us and choosing friends and pursuing relationships based on what they can offer us. What if we began to look at people differently? What if we joined God where He is already at work in the lives of friends, neighbors and work colleagues?

Everyday missionaries understand the need to identify people who need the gospel. As followers of Jesus, it is our job to identify the people in our sphere of influence and share the gospel with them. We begin by “knowing” our neighbors—their names, their stories, their backgrounds and their spiritual beliefs.

Knowing our neighbors is important when it comes to sharing the gospel. Understanding their cultural context allows us to establish common ground so the gospel message will be clear.

Though the gospel has to be foundational in the way we connect with those around us, if we don’t think about how we communicate, we run the risk of people not hearing the message.

I Corinthians 9:22, “To the weak I became weak, in order to win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I may by every possible means save some.”

This Scripture doesn’t mean that the apostle Paul became a cultural chameleon, just blending in to his surroundings. It means he found ways to communicate the central truth of the gospel in different ways to different audiences.

Identifying who God is leading you to may be as simple as taking a walk with your eyes open. What are the glaring needs of those around you? Their needs may be physical or relational.

Also, a central part of identifying people and their needs is through prayers. If you want to know whom God is specifically calling you to love and care for, ask Him.

Of course, it may involve much more than that and God could lead you to a place farther from home, physically or culturally. No matter where He leads, it all begins with prayer and opening your eyes.

2. Living an Intentional Life
After identifying where God is at work around you, the next step is to take action and invest your life to those whom God has lead you. Paul made this part of the process clear when he wrote to the church at Thessalonica.

I Thessalonians 2:8, “We cared so much for you that we were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.”

Yes, we must declare the gospel, but we must also invest our lives—time, resources
and gifts.

The gospel tells us that Jesus sacrificed everything for us. Jesus not only modeled sacrifice through His death, but also through His life. Over and over throughout the Gospels, Jesus consistently poured His life into the people closest to Him. He sacrificially served all those whom His life intersected.

Being on mission is not always about going to a specific place—it’s about being intentional right where you are. Investment is always intentional. It’s a lifestyle choice and it’s rooted in the knowledge that God is already on mission around you and has placed you in your environment because He wants to use you to reach the people around you.

Living intentionally starts right where you are. It’s not about moving to another location; it is a way of life that goes wherever you go.

It is much more powerful when we share the gospel with people with whom we also share our lives. The act of investing in relationships to spread the gospel is called relational evangelism. The reason is works so well is because we are more likely to listen to and trust something a friend tells us than something a complete stranger communicates to us.

Seriously investing in the lives of others takes a lot of time and energy. But, the Great Commission calls us to not simply make converts but also disciples. So, as we invest in people’s lives and lead them to a relationship with Jesus Christ, we also invite them into a disciple-making relationship.

Investing our lives this way isn’t easy and we may not see a return on our investment. Give it time. Be patient. And, remember: We are moved toward compassion because we have been shown much compassion. Pray and allow God to work in His timing. Ultimately our mission is to display the gospel while offering the opportunity to be saved by Jesus, but God is the only one who can transform a heart.

3. It’s All About the Invite!

Jesus was all about the invite. He invited people to eat with Him, surrender to Him, give up their possessions, walk with Him, follow Him, be healed, rest and the list goes on and on.

Ultimately, Jesus invites us all to experience salvation. Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.”

God Himself is on a rescue mission and invites people into right relationship with Him. Joining God in His mission requires that we become willing to extend the invitation to others.

As we invite people into disciple-making relationships, biblical community is formed and as we invite people into biblical community, disciples are made.
We should make an effort to live on mission in community with others. As we travel the road of evangelism and mission, we need the encouragement, support and accountability of community.

4. Be Part of a Movement
The goal of our church is not just to have an awesome church, small group, or discipleship group. It’s not to keep the same people around us forever because we like doing life with them and ministering to them. It’s not to selfishly keep what we have.

The goal is to see a movement! To see the gospel spread, new people come to know Jesus and new disciples made. It’s to see more people groups reached, more small groups launched, and more churches started in order to enfold the lonely into biblical community. Spreading, sending and multiplying movements—these are the goals for the good of people and the glory of God.

Multiplication is the heart of movement. We increase disciple-making when we send people out.

To impact the Kingdom of God, everyday missionaries must become part of equipping and developing others to live on mission, helping them to grow and mature in faith and ministry. This won’t happen by itself; we need to have a plan. Here’s a process we all can use to multiply disciples.

I do; you watch - In this stage you lead and they are being led and discipled.
I do; you help - There is enough growth and desire to begin equipping them for leadership.

You do; I help - Give them more ownership; allow them to consistently lead and offer them help and accountability when needed.

You do; I watch - They’re finally ready to lead on their own—they just need more practice. All them to lead while you participate and watch.

You do; someone else watches - Disciples are sent out to lead on their own. They’re now the leader and someone else is watching.

Conclusion
As a church body, learning to identify, invest and invite friends and neighbors in the family of Christ begins today. Making disciples won’t happen overnight and it will require prayer and patience as God begins to work in individuals and matures your community.

As individuals, we must understand who God is calling us to reach. Look at where God has put you to discover who He wants you to reach; common interests and background may be factors. Regardless of specifics, being intentional about living and sharing our faith is foundational when it comes to building the Kingdom. It’s about raising up others and then sending them out to do what you have done for
them.

It is His mission. It is His work and God, Himself, extends to us the great invitation of being a part of it all.

Additional Option
Use the story of Dahl and the Esterline family, available under God Stories: Illustrations of God at Work through everyday missionaries.

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Week 4: Life On Mission: The Pitfalls and Plans of Everyday Missionaries

Introduction
As we dig deeper into the gospel and begin to live out God’s mission, ministry will begin to take place. An everyday missionary has a plan of action, understanding that along with the ministry, there will be the battle of pitfalls.

Ministry is the overflow of the gospel of Jesus working itself out into practical terms in the world around you. Being grounded with a strong gospel foundation, paired with formation that occurs as you join God in His mission, leads to a ministry that allows you to effectively relate to the people in your community.

The gospel and mission of God never change, but ministry practice may look different depending on your immediate surroundings. God often uses difference ministry practices to strengthen your understanding of the gospel as well as the mission you have been given.

Pursuing a life on mission comes with pitfalls. When you know what you’re up against, you can be prepared with a plan.

Pitfall #1 - Misplaced Priorities
Many people living on mission get their priorities out of whack. Pitfalls don’t just happen with professional church staffs. Many Christ followers practice an unhealthy pace of ministry that leads to burnout and even to the destruction of the family.

Mission is great, but God does not call us to sacrifice our families to do mission. The greatest mission effort is the one that involves the people who sit around your dinner table at night. As we pursue the mission God has for us, we must continually keep other areas in our lives in check as well.

Ministry will always be there; God is in charge of it and there will always be people to do it. Family is a different story. Our families are a unique responsibility given to us by God; we are called to make that responsibility a priority. If we don’t pursue being on mission with our family, then the mission we seek is doomed to fail before we even begin.

The Plan: Love your family more than you love your ministry.

Pitfall #2 - Lack of Margin
We tend to equate busyness with success.

Many people living on mission get caught up with the duties of ministry, work, family and school. Because of this, they never take the time to rest. With no margin in life, many are struggling just to get it together. Others take pride in a long “to-do” list. The longer the “to-do” list, the more successful they feel.

Here’s the truth: Busyness is not a badge of honor to wear.
In Genesis 2, God instituted a day of rest, not as a rule to keep us from achieving everything we want, but for the purpose of our own health. Building margin into our lives is a gift and our failure to do may be detrimental to our health and to our mission.

Life has its seasons when we all have to work harder, but life also has its rhythm. A balanced life does not have to be a myth. When we find ourselves in a busy season, we need the next season to include rest. Without rest, we will eventually burn out physically, emotionally and spiritually.

**The Plan: As you aggressively seek to live on mission, be careful to trust God in this area and take time to rest in Him.**

**Pitfall #3 - Wrong Mentalities**
The way we approach our mission affects the effectiveness of our ministry. Sometimes we think we’re the only ones who can carry out a specific ministry and we attempt to carry the weight of the world upon our shoulders.

Paul reminds us in Scripture the truth of God’s responsibility in His mission; it is He who truly carries the weight.

1 Corinthians 3:6-7, “I planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the growth.”

At other times, we may have a “lone-ranger” mentality which is dangerous because it can lead to unhealthy isolation. We’ve already learned that no one is intended to be on mission together. We need the support of community as well as the ability of others to see our blindspots.

The church is a body and each part is expected to carry their own weight in conjunction with the whole. No one part is expected to do everything.

**The Plan: We are indeed called into meaningful ministry, but we’re not responsible for every aspect of it, nor are we called to do it alone. Pray earnestly that God will give you discernment and reasoning to know when to say “yes”, say “no”, and when to say “not now.” Pray also to remember that we reflect the Kingdom of God when we work with other believers. Together we are better suited to carry out God’s mission.**

**Pitfall #4 - Ministry Idolatry**
It is natural for a person to want to his or her ministry to go well. But what if it doesn’t? It’s easy for our ministry motive to turn from being about Jesus to being about personal success but we have to remember that sometimes God calls us to difficult and messy ministry.

The truth is, we may never see results. Too often we pursue ministry with our own goal in mind to see success, not as pure faithfulness. Ministry fruit is a great thing but
fruit as motive is fruitless.

The Plan: We have to remember that success in ministry cannot compare to the hope we already have in the privilege of knowing God and will not fulfill us even if we achieve it. God is the true reward and we get Him no matter what.

Conclusion
Can you imagine what would happen if every member of our church understood the pitfalls of ministry and had their plans ready to counteract them?

What if every follower of Christ really believed that their life on mission mattered and began to live as the everyday missionary God has called them to be?

Our homes, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods and communities would change. And it wouldn’t stop there. Our cities, our nation and even the world would change! Why?
Because we would spread the hope and joy that’s only found in Christ.
We would meet needs.
We would embrace the lonely and disenfranchised.
We would help those who desperately need it; single mothers, those dealing with addiction and homelessness, orphans who need our love and care.
In spite of the messiness and inconvenience we would tangibly and verbally express the hope of Christ.
We would make disciples.
And the course of our church’s future would be changed forever - because we said yes to intentionally joining God where He is at work each and every day.

What is next for our church? It depends on how we answer God’s call to join Him as an everday missionary. Will we continue to grow in the gospel and build biblical foundations as we apply them to the fabric of our everyday lives?

Will we pursue spiritual maturity, grow in biblical community and discipleship together?

Will we move forward to be the faithful missionaries God as called us to be?

What’s next?

Additional Option
Use the story of Travis Kunckel, available under God Stories: Illustrations of God at Work through Everyday Missionaries.

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