



CREATING DISCIPLE MAKING MOVEMENTS AS JESUS DID

FEBRUARY-MARCH 2020



*Training Salvation
Army Midwest
Territory Youth
Workers in Disciple-
Making*



*Sonlife Teammate Jay Fast
and I trained 250 youth
workers who are in the
trenches every week, changing
the lives of at risk youth.*



Disrupting Business as Usual

**“Upon this rock I will build
My church, and the gates of
hell shall not prevail against
it!” Matthew 16:18b**

At Sonlife’s Disciple-Making Conference two years ago in Orlando, I spoke to the leaders present about the need to *disrupt business as usual in the church* in order to see a true disciple-making movement multiply and spread from person to person, church to church, city to city, and nation to nation. I would never have imagined then that we would see the disruption of business as usual that COVID-19 has thrust upon us.

I’ve got a friend who frequently says, “*Jesus started the*

church the way He wants it, and now He wants the church the way He started it.” I think God could use this global disruption to shake up the church, drive us to our knees, cause us to reexamine our priorities, and possibly find a new way of being the church that is much more akin to what Jesus had in mind 2000 years ago when He started it.

A month before the Coronavirus completely disrupted our way of life, I was in Wisconsin with 250 soldiers in the Salvation Army who are all passionate about bringing help, healing, and hope to hurting students in the cities where they minister. One morning at

breakfast I sat next to a youth leader who had only known Christ for a little over a year. In his late thirties, “Steve” had been a drug addict since he was 18. After 20 years of addiction, hopelessness, and frequent homelessness, he had met Jesus through the Salvation Army and had his life totally disrupted by the power and grace of God. He was delivered. He was changed. And now “Steve” is offering that same help, healing, and hope to hurting teens he meets on the streets.

That’s the kind of church Jesus wants. People that love God, love others, and make disciples, changing lives.



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*Disciple making
from the life of
Christ*

SOCIAL WELCOMING

Let's Love One Another

It seems that each day, a new phrase is added to our vocabulary. Phrases like "social distancing" and "shelter in place" convey the new reality we face of isolation for the purpose of protection. The Coronavirus has changed the way we look at our world over the past month.

I discovered a new phrase today:

#caremongering.

As opposed to fearmongering, or scaremongering, this is a time when the church needs to step up as caremongers.

One young man, Jonny Blue, stood on the street corner in Southern California holding up a sign that read, "Share your toilet paper." Cars passing by honked in agreement. Some began to bring Jonny toilet paper in a drive by drop off, which he then shared with others who stopped to say they were out and had run to several stores looking for toilet paper, to no avail. Who would have ever imagined just two weeks ago that a "Share your toilet paper" sign would make someone a community hero.

In a season of "social distancing," how can we as the church practice "Social welcoming?" To revisit the decades old phrase, "What would Jesus do?"

Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is equally important: "Love your neighbor as yourself." The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

Matthew 22:37-40

"Social distancing" was practiced two thousand years ago. Jews were to keep their distance from an assortment of people... lepers, prostitutes, tax collectors, and Samaritans to name a few. Yet Jesus practiced *caremongering* rather than *fearmongering*. Jesus practiced *social welcoming* rather than social distancing.

"The Son of Man, on the other hand, feasts and drinks, and you say, 'He's a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is shown to be right by its results."

Matthew 11:19

In Sonlife's Foundations Seminar, the sixth foundational priority from the ministry of Jesus that we teach on is *RELATIONSHIPS of Love and Integrity*. There we look at a long list of the people Jesus loved: the leper, the widow, drunkards and sinners, the disenfranchised, the sexually immoral, children, the poor, the wealthy and powerful, the physically handicapped,

criminals, those who would reject Him, and those who killed Him. Jesus practiced social welcoming. Jesus loved people.

By speaking of "social welcoming," I'm not suggesting we be careless or reckless, ignoring the guidelines and best practices for preventing the spread of this disease. This is not a time to be careless, but it is also not a time to care less. What does it look like to "love your neighbor as yourself" in the midst of this growing global pandemic?

Chief among the "one another" commands from the Bible is "love one another," which appears in the Scriptures sixteen times. All the other "one another" commands of Scripture flow out of loving one another. Here are a few "one anothers" that are important for us to remember if we're going to practice *caremongering*.

1. Pray for One Another (James 5:16)

Take the opportunity to reach out to those who are feeling overwhelmed. Call them. FaceTime them. And pray WITH them. Prayer works. God answers prayer. God's presence and peace will be felt when we pray. Praying with others will bring them comfort and encouragement.

2. Serve One Another (Gal. 5:13)

See a need. Meet a need. It's that simple! Open your eyes- see the need. Open your heart- have compassion for others. Open your hands- do what you can to help.

3. Be Kind and Compassionate to One Another (Ephesians 4:32)

Kindness is love in action. Kindness speaks to the attitude we have toward others. Another phrase is circulating the Twittersverse: #ZCoronakindness. During this time of high stress, our emotional capacity for compassion can become diminished. We need to regularly check our heart. If our heart is closed off toward others, we need to spend time with the Father and ask Him to fill us with His love. "We love because He first loved us."

4. Stop Passing Judgement on One Another (Romans 14:13)

We judge those who aren't taking the Coronavirus seriously enough. We judge those who are overreacting to the Coronavirus. We judge others' actions. We judge others' words. Let's stop judging, and start loving. If we're concerned about how someone else is reacting or responding to the Coronavirus, let's have a loving conversation with them. Let's listen. Let's hear their heart. Let's love.

To read the rest of this blog, visit Sonlife.com/blog



Here are FIVE simple ways that you can PRAY for our family during the global COVID-19 Crisis.

ONE: Pray for God's **Purpose** to be accomplished and that he would use our family to be a light in this darkness and a blessing to others.

TWO: Pray for God's **Protection** from this virus, especially for Mary-Faith as she continues her journey of cancer recovery.

THREE: Pray for God's **Peace** as we all deal with the uncertainty this pandemic brings, especially for our girls as they figure out how to do college and high school online (imagine Jaclyn's challenge of having to figure out how to do drama class over Zoom)

FOUR: Pray for God's **Presence** to be made manifest, that He would draw us closer to Himself as He brings us to our knees in complete dependence.

FIVE: Pray for God's **Provision**. Jennifer is out of work until at least May 8th. All Sonlife training and events have been postponed for the foreseeable future. Mission teams are not going to Haiti. Ministry support may become a challenge for some donors. God is our source. God is able.

*Serving Christ together.
Doug and Jennifer*