

Practical Suggestions of being sent as Jesus was Sent

Over the course of this month we have explored a number of great ideas in relation to missions. Recently we looked and God Himself being a God of Mission and thereby a sending God; we also began with and keep coming back to John 20:21, where Jesus said, “As the Father has sent Me, so send I you.”

In the grand scheme of us being made into the Image of Jesus [Romans 8] it is important that we are aware of how Jesus lived as an example for us¹. To that end I have typed out this chart that I came across recently [see final footnote]; I think it can serve as a wonderful resource for helping us to think through and explore Jesus’ example for our lives. The chart explores some of the actions and motivations from the life and work of Jesus and how it can apply to us in theory and practice. You may not like or agree perfectly with everything – that is fine, **we must learn to read with discernment**. [In sharing this chart it doesn’t mean that I agree with everything that is written or taught by the authors.]

Might I also add that the authors have said they felt it unnecessary to emphasize that this list should be seen through the grid of Spirit and Gospel empowered living; they thought it unnecessary because they assumed that people would already begin there². I emphasize that because this is not about creating a further system of laws, standards, and works that we should strive for [the danger of emphasizing discipleship alone] – this is about helping us to become aware of areas whereby we can grow in the Gospel and our calling, through the work of the Holy Spirit. We must keep in mind that all this begins not only with the example of Jesus but also with the Gospel of Jesus working in and through us.

Jesus’ Life and Teaching	Implications for Disciple/Church	Examples of How These Could be Lived Out
Ushers in the kingdom of God and focuses it around his own person (e.g., Mark 1:14-15; Luke 11:20)	Living under the Kin.... The kingdom of God is central and extends in and beyond the church to his entire cosmos. We are agents of thee kingdom in all spheres of life common to human being. Jesus is Lord/King! We can live and work wherever we are, and we can expect the kingdom to already be there.	When we are at work, we incite Jesus to accompany us there. We look for opportunities to enact Jesus’ qualities while we are working. We look for ways to mirror the work of God even through the most mundane and everyday activities.

¹ In saying that I’m not at all suggesting that Jesus’ life was purely about a good example – He also had a much higher calling of being the Lamb of God.

² churchplantingnovice.wordpress.com/tag/christology

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<p>Demands direct and active faith/trust in God</p> <p>(e.g., Mark 1:14-15; Matt 17:20)</p>	<p>Requires a radical openness to the sovereign and miraculous intervention of God in us. Faith as trust demands a distinct form of spiritual openness on our behalf. We should expect God to be involved in all aspects of our lives.</p>	<p>We refuse to give up when a situation seems hopeless; we have faith in God to work in the situation, somehow. We must not give in to our fears.</p>
<p>Mediates the grace and mercy of God</p> <p>(e.g., Matt 12:7)</p>	<p>Openness to receive as well as impart grace/mercy to others. The measure we give will be the measure we receive. WE can be generous with both our resources and our time. God is merciful; we must try to find ways to be like God in daily life.</p>	<p>We refuse to rule out the unlikely agents of grace in our midst. Whether someone is uneducated, elderly, divorced, an ex-convict, disabled, or even just needy or annoying, we humbly accept their gifts to us as if they were from God.</p>
<p>Offers forgiveness of sins</p> <p>(e.g., Matt 9:2; Luke 7:47)</p>	<p>Repentance and forgiveness are a way of life (70x7). Radical openness to a holy God will require that we be constantly aware of our sinfulness and the possibility of radical evil that lurks in the human soul. Also, we must be a forgiving people (Matt 6:16).</p>	<p>We examine ourselves carefully for any bitterness or lack of forgiveness toward others. We place ourselves in relationships of accountability. We are open to the rebuke of the loving friend. We confess our limitations regularly.</p>
<p>Demonstrates the love of God for his world</p> <p>(e.g., John 3:6; 14:21)</p>	<p>Demands our primary love for God and a secondary love for others in his name. We need to know we are loved people, and this should be expressed towards others. This love should include but extend beyond our family members to embrace even our enemies. We should be known as a people of love.</p>	<p>Our love[s] shows God's love. We show love to our family members and do so reflecting on the way it is an outpouring of the love we have received from God. We practice hospitality to the stranger. We create spaces in which others can grow and find grace.</p>
<p>Heals the sick and casts out demons</p> <p>(e.g., Mark 1:23ff; Luke 11:20)</p>	<p>Healing ministry should be part of the church's service in the world. These are signs of the kingdom's presence (John 14:12). We live in a wounded world: we should actively look for opportunities to heal people in body, psyches, and relationships.</p>	<p>We look for opportunities to pray for people, comfort people, reconcile with people. We must not shrink back from prayer for the sick or from engaging in spiritual warfare when necessary.</p>

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<p>Calls all to follow and imitate him</p> <p>(e.g., Matt 4:19; 8:22)</p>	<p>He is the image of the human. Not only Saviour but also God's pattern for authentic human life. This requires a following after, an imitation of Jesus...discipleship. It also involves a willingness to go against the flow and to stand with Jesus and his cause in the world. Even to the point of suffering and martyrdom. It will also means we are more "attractive" to sinners and outcasts (as Jesus was).</p>	<p>We look for opportunities to disciples other Christians. We volunteer at a soup kitchen and sit down and talk with the clients, even if their appearance and actions make us uncomfortable.</p>
<p>Radicalizes the current standards of holiness (e.g., the sermon on the Mount)</p> <p>(e.g., Matt 5-8)</p>	<p>Jesus sets a challenging ethical and moral code for the disciples/church to follow. The Sermon on the Mount is the most used discipleship text in the history of the church. This not only describes but prescribes the life of discipleship. We should make it a basic reference text and seek to live it out.</p>	<p>We practice hospitality, generosity, humility and justice. We believe our faith brings not just personal salvation but a motivation for changing the world to reflect the justice and peace of God.</p>
<p>Introduces a distinctly non-religious (even anti-religious) way of loving and worshiping God</p> <p>(e.g., Matt 21; John 4:20ff)</p>	<p>Real countercultural forces are unleashed in the gospel. We therefore should be willing at times to go against the flow and status quo. People should be able to see that we are followers of Jesus – not that we are religious. Religious people can be off-putting to many non-Christians.</p>	<p>We challenge our faith community to join a secular group doing work that Jesus would approve of, even if we disagree with some of the other views the group holds.</p>
<p>Shows love and compassion for the poor and oppressed</p> <p>(e.g., Luke 4:18-19; 7:22-23)</p>	<p>We must serve the marginalized and downtrodden in Jesus' name. And this will mean we sometimes stand in direct opposition to systems and lifestyles that engender oppression - be they political, social, or religious systems.</p>	<p>We work with a group that helps HIV/AIDS victims, even though some of our Christian friends think this isn't a cause Christians should be involved with.</p>
<p>Befriends the outcast and misfit</p> <p>(e.g., Matt 9:9-12; Luke 19:10)</p>	<p>We should refuse to exclude people from fellowship based on cultural preferences. Also, we should be hanging around a lot more 'freaks' than we ordinarily do. There is something we have to learn from the margins of society that we cannot learn from the center.</p>	<p>We make a point of welcoming visitors to our church who do not appear to fit in. We collect 'freaks' and outcasts and look for what they can teach us about Jesus.</p>

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<p>Follows the pattern of God's redemption (e.g., Luke 15:4-32)</p>	<p>We must act redemptively because God is a redeemer. We restore what has been lost or broken. Mission involves the redemption of broken people and lost culture. We don't judge, we redeem.</p>	<p>We aim at restoration and beauty, creativity and grace, hospitality and generosity. We live, love play, and suffer, better than anyone else, for God is our Redeemer.</p>
<p>Proclaims (as well as lives) the good news of the kingdom (e.g., Matt 5:13-16)</p>	<p>We should proclaim (as well as live) the good news of Jesus. In a sense we are (and must become) good news. (We are salt/light.) Love, forgiveness, mercy, compassion, righteous anger...these are the marks of a disciple.</p>	<p>We socialize with unbelievers. We ray with them. We model an alternative reality by our alternative lifestyle. WE are always ready to give an answer for the hope within us. We acknowledge the ministry of the gifted evangelists among us.</p>
<p>Presents an existential call to the whole person (e.g., Matt 22:37-40)</p>	<p>We must respond with all that we are, not just believe with our heads or our bodies. The love of God engages heart, head, mind, will, body, etc. We cannot compartmentalize our lives in ways that divide our total devotion to God.</p>	<p>We see that pleasures are form God. But we direct them towards God, acknowledging that God gave them to us in the first place. WE engage intellectually, emotionally, and bodily in the life God has given us.</p>
<p>Offers new beginnings (E.g., John 3:1-7; Luke 7:38-50)</p>	<p>We must be born again. We are the people of the new start! We must offer new starts to others. Give people a go. Learn to actively forgive.</p>	<p>We remember that we have received forgiveness and that others need it as well. We tell others of Jesus' gift of a new start and life with God.</p>
<p>Hates hypocrisy (e.g., Matt 23:28ff; Luke 12:1)</p>	<p>In Jesus' teaching, self-righteousness is abhorred! Mentioned far more than sexual sin, this is unacceptable sin of the spirit for disciples of Jesus. We have been forgiven much; we must be willing to offer the same grace to others.</p>	<p>We listen humbly when others point out our faults. We remember not to put sexual sins higher on the scale of sin than the more 'spiritual' sins of hypocrisy and pride, since Jesus said more about these than about sexual sin.</p>

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<p>Is coming again (e.g., Luke 11; Matt 25:1-13)</p>	<p>An adoring and expectant longing for his presence and return (like a betrothed virgin awaiting the bridegroom). He completes us. He also comes in judgment on unrighteousness. It's going to be a big day!</p>	<p>We hold on to a sense of Jesus' return and our need to live urgently. Seize the day! "Live as if Jesus died yesterday, was raised today, and is coming tomorrow" (Luther).</p>
<p>Lays down life for friends (e.g., John 15:13)</p>	<p>Calls us to self sacrificial lifestyle. We are called to be servants to a lost and broken world (Matt 23:11-12).</p>	<p>We decide to give up a luxury – perhaps cable TV, dinners out, or cell phone games – and give the money to a good cause.</p>
<p>Brings salvation (e.g., Luke 1:76-77; 19:9)</p>	<p>We need to be saved. This is not only a decision, it is a lifelong process (Phil 2:12). Also, we are the messengers of salvation. Salvation in the Hebrew mind has connotations of healing and wholeness. We need to apply salvation holistically.</p>	<p>We hold on to the idea of salvation as a process in which we are involved on a daily basis.</p>

“We don’t believe this list is exhaustive, nor do we think that it is even an adequate summary of the faith that has captured the hearts and imaginations of hundreds of millions over two thousand years of history”³

³ Both the quote and chart are sourced from the following book. Frost, Michael; Hirsch, Alan; ReJesus; Hendrickson/Strand Publishing; 2009; P. 56-58