

# What is a FIT Person?

*"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."*

- Jesus

Jesus didn't seek believers, he desired followers. In fact, the most consistent features of Jesus' ministry are the invitation to follow him. He didn't simply ask that people would believe him, take his advice or pick and choose which of his teachings they liked. Jesus invited people to mirror his message, but only if they were willing to be fully committed to what that entailed (Luke 14:25-33). What that means for each of us is that in becoming Christians we have pledged ourselves to being **F**ollowers **I**n **T**raining (**FIT**). We say "in training" because ultimately this is more of a lifelong journey than simply a semester class. It is a permanent apprenticeship that develops us as we continue learning. Therefore, to fully appreciate all that being a **FIT** person entails, we want to begin by understating exactly what it was that Jesus invited us to when he said, "follow me."

1. What does it look like to be a follower of something? (Example: Following a person on social media, a sports team, a book series, a television show, a news story, or an author.)

2. What does Jesus say it looks like to follow him in Luke 9:23?

3. To get a better handle on where this idea of "follow Jesus" is going, let's make a parallel to something more familiar such as being physically fit. If someone desired to lose 20 pounds and gain more physical stamina, what would be some of the habits they would need to (a) stop and (b) start in order to achieve their goals? How long and consistently would they need to engage in such activity before they would see results? What happens if their routine is hit and miss?

4. Using the above parallel, what do you think Jesus means when he says a follower (a) denies themselves and (b) takes up their cross?

5. When Jesus says, "follow me" what are some things you think of that people do to show they are a follower of Jesus? Look specifically at Luke 9:26 and write out some of the various ways we may be tempted to not follow (i.e. be ashamed of) Jesus or his words.

6. At the end of Luke 9:23 Jesus says that this following is to happen "daily." What does it look like to daily to deny one's self, take up one's cross and follow Jesus?

7. What do you think the difference is between the person who is consistent daily verses the person who is hit and miss?

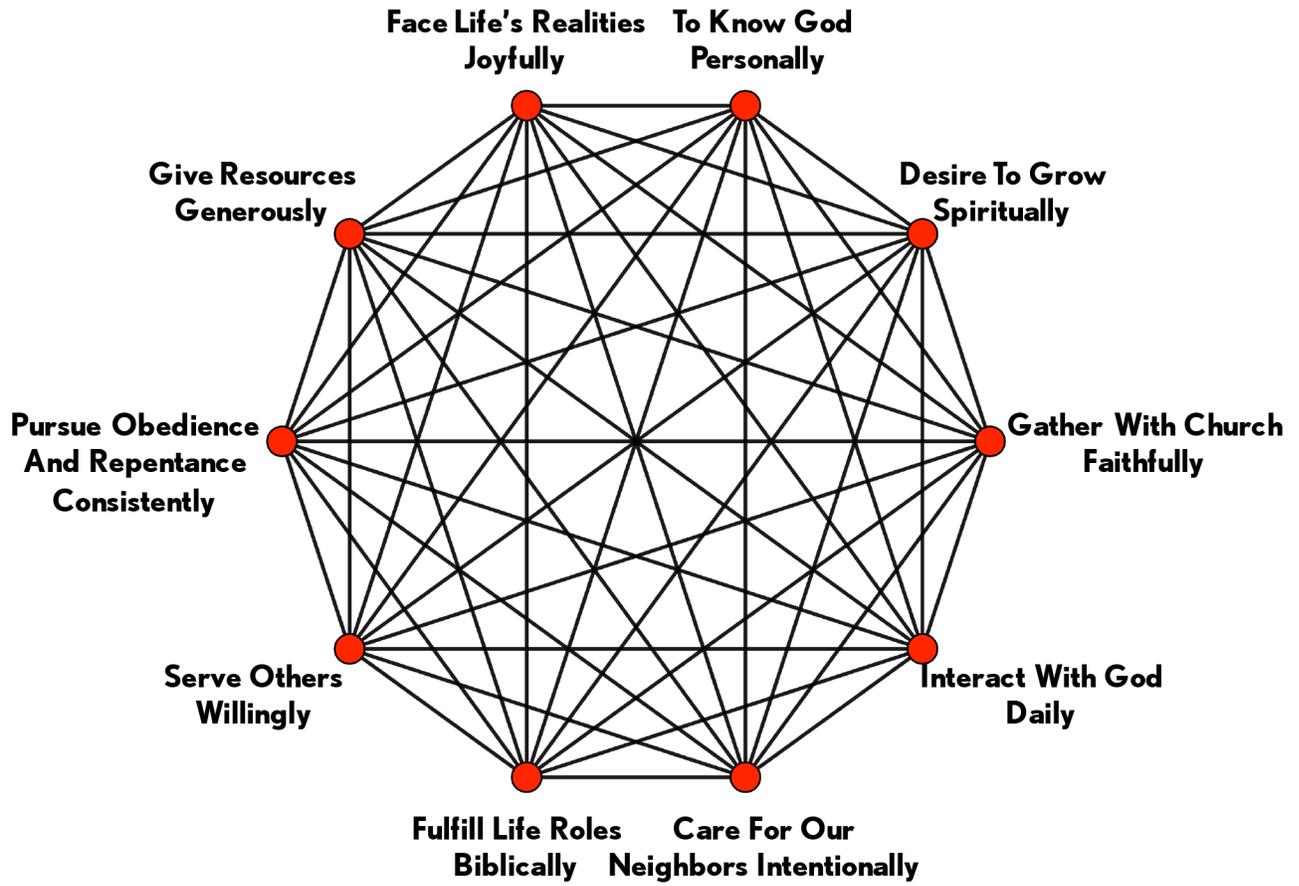
8. All of the sacrificial talk in Luke 9:23 sounds like it's more giving up stuff than gaining stuff. Yet what is the paradoxical thing Jesus says in Luke 9:24-25?

9. Much like how exercise is a daily sacrifice that is done with the faith that believes one's current actions will produce a future reward (i.e. in 6 weeks I will have lost 10 pounds and will be able to run more than 1 mile without dying), so too we as Christians give up in this life to gain far more in the life to come. From this, what are some habits you personally could implement to begin forming your **FIT Lifestyle**? (Remember, just like physical fitness you need to start with doable goals and build up from there. Set yourself up for success and grow your endurance from there).

#### Quick Tips:

- Put together a weekly schedule (like you would for exercise) where you are making time to be intentional for spiritual growth.
- List out two areas you want Jesus to develop you in your spiritual life.
- Pray about those two specific things every day over the next 11 weeks.

# FIT Lifestyle Goals



# FIT Lifestyle Goal 1

## FIT People Know God Personally.

*"And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."*  
- Jesus

This may seem pretty obvious, but there is a difference between knowing about God and knowing God. For example, you may know a lot about the President, but you don't know the President personally. The same can be true for us when it comes to our Christian faith. We may know a lot of things about what the Bible says, what God does, or what the Christian culture affirms as its norms and standards, but none of those are a guarantee that we know Jesus in a personal way. The reason for this is because there is a big difference between casually believing in Jesus and truly trusting him with our lives.

In James 2:19 we see that demons believe, but they don't have faith in God or know him in a trusting way. We see the same thing with the religious leaders who opposed Jesus. In John 8 we see where at one level they hear from Jesus and "believe in him" (John 8:30-31), but when Jesus requires more than belief on their terms they reject him with malice (John 8:59). From this what we see is that Jesus did not merely seek confessions, he sought **conversions**. He pursues **transformation** and not only affirmation. For the goal was never simply to change a person's opinions, but to shape their **convictions**. Therefore, if we want to begin a truly **FIT Lifestyle** it must start with a life that has received life from Jesus through the Gospel.

1. Describe what the message of the Gospel is in your own words.
2. How does the Gospel change a person according to Ephesians 2:1-10?
3. How does the Gospel reorient our relationship to God according to Romans 5:6-11?
4. What are some of the things that are destined to be changed in us when we go from spiritual death to spiritual life and friendship with God? See Galatians 5:16-26 and Romans 6:1-14 for some examples.
5. Right now read through Jesus' story about the farmer seeding his field in Matthew 13:18-23 and then continue reading this question.  
In the story we see how the Gospel - the seeds - interacts with four different heart conditions - the various soils. The key thing to understand in this story is that it's only the last seed, the seed that produced more seed, that counted. Other seeds may have shown possible signs of life-giving life, but in the end their fruitless demise revealed their true condition. When equated with people and the Gospel they were shallow confessions without true conversion. From this story what are some things you believe are helpful markers to discern whether someone is a true believer or a make-believer?

6. At this point a counter-point is in order. While it is true that Jesus seeks transformation and not simply affirmation, it is also true that we are a group of imperfect people who have been redeemed by our perfect God. None of us lives the Christian lifestyle perfectly (which is why this FIT Goal is about knowing God *personally*, not *perfectly*), but we should desire to live it wholeheartedly. What are some of the traits that display a healthy blend of grace and truth as opposed to the extremes of legalism or permissiveness? See Colossians 3:12-17 for some examples.
  
7. From everything we have looked at, would you say you have a personal relationship with God and if so how would you describe it?

**Quick Tips:**

- Ask yourself the question, “How well do I know God in a personal way?”
- Ask yourself the follow-up question, “What am I willing to do in order to know Him more?”

## FIT Lifestyle Goal 2

# FIT People Pursue Repentance and Obedience Consistently.

*"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."*

- Jesus

There are many things that turn people off to Christianity. Among the more popular critiques is the stereotypes of a "hell, fire and damnation" preacher standing on a street corner, screaming into bullhorn as he's calling on sinners to "REPENT and OBEY." Perhaps part of the reason this image has been so rejected in 21<sup>st</sup> Century circles (and understandably so) is because often times those messages were delivered with the compassion of a punch to the throat. Yet, what is truly tragic is that while "repent and obey" has been likened to a form of spiritual noise pollution, the reality is that nothing is more joy-imparting to our souls than the freedom that comes with these gifts of God.

The simplest definition of repentance is "a change of mind." In fact, a more modern way to think of repentance is to borrow from Apple's classic tagline of "Think Different." At its core, repentance is a reorientation of me-centered-thinking to Him-centered-thinking. Thus, we see that repentance is the surrender of our "pride of life" in exchange for the adoption of God's grace for living. When we repent, we join forces with God's design for life, which unleashes His life in us. We see this in the Book of Acts when the Gospel began stirring in people's hearts and it says, "God has granted repentance that leads to life" (Acts 11:18). Repentance doesn't lessen the robustness of life, it unleashes us to a higher quality of life. This is precisely why Jesus' mission statement was, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). He wants us to have full lives, and repentance is the key to living lives fully alive. And the reason is because repentance makes way for forgiveness, and forgiveness invites the refreshing presence of God in our lives. Acts 3 reinforces this point when it says, "<sup>19</sup>*Repent* therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, <sup>20</sup>*that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.*"

Now, what continues and increases that refreshing sense of the presence of God is when the change of mind results in an alteration of action. Thus, obedience is to our faith what healthy diet and exercise is to a post-weight loss regiment. It does little good to put in the effort to lose 20 lbs. if you just go back to the same habits that put the weight on in the beginning. In the same way, obedience keeps us from the life-derailing, joy-sucking pitfalls that come when we make decisions that disagree with God's map for abundant lives. What this means is that obedience doesn't constrain our enjoyment of life, rather it unlocks deeper levels of peace and life that we didn't know possible (see Romans 8:6). This is why Jesus said, "<sup>31</sup>If you abide in my word (i.e. obey), you are truly my disciples, <sup>32</sup>and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31-32). "Discipleship" as Eugene Peterson said, "is a long obedience in the same direction." Yet it pays the rich dividend of guaranteed freedom and joy as you move in that direction.

What this means for the **FIT Lifestyle** is that repentance and obedience are not simply the right things to do, they are the sensible, satisfying, and liberating things to pursue.

1. What are the kinds of daily things (sins) we should seek to repent of? (Hint: Sin is both when we go against what God says "not to do" and when we neglect those things God tells us "to do").
2. What often keeps us from rooting out our deep sins such as lust (looking at/reading inappropriate material), greed (not giving to God), fear (worrying more than praying), gossip (talking about someone vs. reaching out to them), and poor priorities (more excited for things of life than the things of God)?

3. What is guaranteed to us if we confess/repent of the various sins we face, and why is this important? (See John 2:1-2). (Example: On this one think of the difference between *shaming* a child over a wrongdoing vs. *shaping* a child in light of a wrongdoing).

4. What are some of the toughest areas to obey? (Example: being a spouse, parent, kid, employee, self-control, emotions, etc.)

5. Typically, we see that the more difficult the task, the greater the reward. So what would this mean for us when it comes to obeying God in the hard things?

6. What is one “not to do” and one “to do” that God might be calling you to repent of, receive refreshing from, and thus obey Him in?

#### Quick Tips:

- Find a person who can encourage you in your desire to turn away from joy robbing sin.
- When feeling tempted, immediately redirect your attention and actions to something spiritually healthy.
- If you've given into an area that you regret, immediately take it to the God who is quick to forgive and heal.

## FIT Lifestyle Goal 3

# FIT People Desire To Grow Spiritually.

*“By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”*

- Jesus

There are two types of people within Christian circles: believers and make believers. The latter are those who shallowly accept Jesus simply because they want to go to heaven. The former, however, are those who selflessly surrender to Jesus because they want to *grow* to heaven. Yes, you read that right. It wasn't a typo. They want to *grow* to heaven. In other words, they don't simply want the life to come with minimal interruptions on the way there, they want ***a fullness of life with Jesus in this life***. They want to continuously grow to become more and more like Jesus so that one day when they step into heaven, it's the culminating last step in a lifetime of spiritual progress.

Now for some, the idea of spiritual growth may sound daunting. It may even sound a bit too “mystical.” In reality, however, spiritual growth comes down to two basic elements. The first has to do with ***desire*** and the second has to do with ***dependence***. The *desire* component is that kernel of aspiration God implants in our lives by which we begin to orient our priorities around knowing Jesus more. When this element of desire comes into our lives we begin to ask ourselves questions like, “How can I know Jesus more?” or “Jesus, what do you seek of my life?” or even “God, what are things you want me to give up or start doing so I can mature more in my walk?” In short, the sense of wanting to become a more faithful Christ follower is the evidence of a God-implanted desire. And when desire is there it produces in us a growing sense of *dependence* on Jesus in the everyday spaces of our lives. This dependence is displayed in things such as prayer, reading our Bibles, going to church, listening to Christian radio/podcasts, talking with other Christians about our walk, or having a general preoccupation of caring what God thinks regarding our actions and decisions in life.

What is important to know from the get go is that spiritual growth isn't always easy. If our previous Fit Goal of Repentance and Obedience was like weight loss and cutting junk out, this is more like muscle building and pumping protein in. The average person can lose between 1-3 pounds per week with moderate dieting, but it takes a full month of dedicated working out to build only 1 pound of muscle. In the spiritual life the same is true. Cutting out certain sinful behaviors can sometimes be easier than developing and maintaining spiritually enriching routines. Yet, when you do the growing, dividends of *desire* and *dependence* far exceed the cost.

1. To grow spiritually is to grow SPIRIT-ually. How does one grow in the Spirit according to Romans 8:1-5?
2. This idea of setting your mind on the Spirit vs. the flesh seems a little difficult to understand. To help open up our thinking on this section I want you to list out examples of things people “set their minds to do.” From this, what would you say are the characteristics of a person who “sets their mind” to do something?
3. Based on your answers above, how can we parallel “setting our minds to do something” to “setting our minds on the Spirit who wants to do something in us?” In other words, how might being determined to accomplish a task be similar to being determined to experience the Holy Spirit in our lives? What might it take?

4. According to Galatians 5:16-25, what are ways we can engage the Spirit so that He shapes our everyday vision for life? Highlight some of different things that aid our “walking in the Spirit” in...

(A) verses 16-18:

(B) verses 19-21:

(C) verses 22-24:

(D) verses 25-26:

4. Going back to Romans 8:6, what is the result of the Spirit-minded life?

5. How might this be attractive in a world that is always seeking more from life or struggling with anxiety, depression, and worry?

6. What are some things you hope to begin doing to help increase your everyday SPIRIT-ual life?

#### **Quick Tips:**

- Get involved with a group of people who are also seeking to grow spiritually such as a RE:Group, ministry, or area of service.
- Adjust your daily intake of media with spiritually oriented things such as Christian music, Christian radio or podcasts.

## FIT Lifestyle Goal 4

# FIT People Interact With God Daily.

*"But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret."*

- Jesus

God still listens and God still speaks. Therefore, the key thing for those of us pursuing a **FIT Lifestyle** is to know how we talk to him and how we hear from him, and this has everything to do with daily touch points with Him. Throughout the landscape of the Bible there are many ways that people interact with God, but the primary forms are connected to the habits of **taking in the Bible** and **breathing out prayer**. The Bible and prayer are the protein and carbs of the Christian spiritual diet. They build the muscle of our growing faith and give us the energy to endure for the long haul.

In the life of Jesus, we see that the Bible was central to His own personal life. In Matthew 4 we see the temptation of Christ, and in that section what's interesting is that with each temptation Jesus quotes a section of the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy (the Old Testament was Jesus' Bible). The reason for this is stated in one of the passages he quotes when He said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4). His point was to reinforce the idea that God's Word - the Bible - is more central to our deepest needs than even food. This isn't to say that food doesn't matter, but it emphasizes just how much the Bible is to be a priority in our daily lives. Another way to look at this would be to say, "Hey, I need food to survive. And if I need food, and Jesus says the Bible is even more important than food, then maybe I should make my daily dose of the Bible as big a priority as I make eating." Now this doesn't mean you must intake the Bible every day (just as you don't need to eat every day), but as with food, you will be healthier and feel better if you do. And there are a lot of ways we can do this. We can read the Bible, read daily devotions that reference the Bible, read books that quote the Bible, listen to podcasts from Bible communicators, listen to the Bible on an app, memorize verses in the Bible, highlight favorite sections in our Bibles, etc. The key here is forming the daily habits that shape our inner life into becoming our outer expression, as Jesus prayed, <sup>17</sup> "Sanctify (grow them) them in the truth; your word is truth." (John 17:17).

As much as the Bible drove Jesus' life so too did prayer. We see in Luke's Gospel where it says, <sup>16</sup> "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." (Luke 5:16). What is interesting about prayer is that it is far more two-directional than we may assume. Now if we pray for five minutes a day we will not fully experience the two-directional nature of prayer. But if we begin to adopt an "all throughout the day" form of prayer where we are engaging in little popcorn prayers to God (brief little interactions with God that last 15 seconds to a few minutes), we will begin to "hear" from God when it comes to peace, wisdom, comfort, bible verses that come to mind, and the like. In addition to popcorn prayers, we also want times of more sustained prayer where we can get in a quiet place so as to engage in A.C.T.S.

- A. Adoration - Celebrating God for who He is and what He has done.
- C. Confession - Repenting of our known sins and agreeing with God's wisdom.
- T. Thanksgiving - Showing our appreciation for how God is always faithful.
- S. Supplication - Asking God to meet needs in our lives or the lives of others.

While doing A.C.T.S. there doesn't need to be fancy words. We don't need it to conform to the literary rules of a haiku. In the Psalms of David, we see honest, raw, clear, explosive, and emotional prayers. The key is to draw near to God knowing that in doing so He draws near to you (James 4:8).

1. Why is taking the Bible in daily better than weekly or monthly?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Why is it easy to neglect a daily interaction of the Bible?

3. What are some ways you could increase your daily Bible intake?
  
4. If you struggle to understand what the Bible is saying what might be some ways you can find out more or understand it better?
  
5. What are some things currently in your life that you could start praying about on a daily basis?
  
6. What are some needs in the lives of others that you could start praying about?
  
7. Daily habits are central for long-term success. What is a time of day that would be best for you to have a little undistracted time *taking in* the Bible and *breathing out* prayer?

**Quick Tips:**

- Put together a daily time for Bible intake (this could be listening to a Bible app, reading the Bible or a devotional about the Bible, or listening to good Bible teachers).
- Begin (a) praying at meals, (b) once in either the morning or evening when you have alone time, and (c) anytime you find yourself to be either thankful or anxious.

## FIT Lifestyle Goal 5

# FIT People Gather With One Another Weekly.

*I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

- Jesus

When Jesus came into the world he came as a missionary to rescue us from the brokenness of life and move us to life abundant. But this was not simply an internal endeavor for the individual. He didn't simply intend to save me out of my brokenness, but to also save me into His community of fullness. This community is called the Church and it is the culture Jesus has created by which each one of us as Followers In Training are both *depended on by others* and *dependent upon others*.

In Hebrews 10:24-25 the writer says, <sup>24</sup>Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup>not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." While this section states that church is more than simply coming to Sunday mornings, we can equally deduce that at the bare minimum a **FIT Lifestyle** is committed to being a part of Sunday mornings when the whole church gathers. Now while it is true that many times Sunday is more of a spectator event, what is also true is that such spectating is used by God to remind us of who we are in Jesus, what we are to do for Him, what we are to stop doing through Him, and generally puts the whole church on the same page. In addition to this, Sunday is also an opportunity to worship God in a group context, through which the cares and craziness of the week are eased by the reminder of the grace and goodness of God. In fact, many studies have shown that people and families who make church a consistent weekly priority have a lower rate of health problems, a lower rate of kids who leave the faith, and an overall higher quality of life.

Reflecting back on our passage in Hebrews 10 we see that when the church meets, it's not simply to sing and listen as we do on Sunday mornings. Each person is also to come with the intention of *making an investment* and *being invested in* through "stirring up one another" and "encouraging one another." While this would be impractical on a Sunday morning, it becomes far more accessible in smaller groups throughout the week. Thus on Sunday mornings the church "groups up" and then throughout the week it "RE:Group up." RE:Group are an opportunity for all of the "one another" opportunities to take place so that everyone is sharing, caring, praying, listening, and investing so as to stir up one another to live as fully committed Followers In Training. What this means is that as modern Christians (with our commuter culture) we must see faithful church involvement as consisting of both the Sunday morning "group" and the middle of the week "RE:Group" so as to fulfill our calling of being *depended on by others* and *dependent upon others*.

1. Why is it easy to neglect being at church on Sundays?
2. On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate your own commitment to making Sundays a priority?
3. What are some reasons that people may not seek to or want to be a part of a RE:Group?

4. On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate your own commitment to making RE:Group a priority?
  
5. How do you think your life would be impacted if both of these increased?
  
6. According to Colossians 3:12-17, what are some of the things that should happen in a RE:Group context and how does exercising these things grow both others and ourselves? GO SLOW through each verse and think it through.
  - (A) Ideas in verse 12:
  - (B) Ideas in verse 13:
  - (C) Ideas in verse 14:
  - (D) Ideas in verse 15:
  - (E) Ideas in verse 16:
  - (F) Ideas in verse 17:
  
7. What are things you want to do to increase both your presence and involvement with church?

**Quick Tips:**

- Make Sunday morning a protected part of your weekly schedule.
- Join a weekly RE:Group.
- Come to church and RE:Group with the mindset of belonging to a group vs. attending an event.

## FIT Lifestyle Goal 6

# FIT People Care For Their Neighbors Intentionally.

*"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."<sup>31</sup> The second is this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these."*

- Jesus

Jesus calls every single one of us to share His Good News with those who don't know Him (Matthew 28:19-20 & 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10). But the conditions for sharing Jesus in America have changed. In the "old days" the majority of the culture subscribed to a generally Christian way of seeing the world. However, in recent years, people have either been deeply wounded, deeply concerned, or deeply opposed to things surrounding the Christian faith (often in that order). Therefore, our approach to sharing Jesus must adapt in such a way that we minimize the stereotypical preconceptions of the culture, while still being clear about what the Gospel is.

An old adage states, "**People will not care about what you have to say until they know you care about who they are.**" What this means for us as Followers In Training is that it's not enough to simply have a clear message. Now, don't misunderstand things here. This isn't to question the sufficiency of the Gospel message, but to acknowledge the reality that people will only stop to listen to those whom they perceive to be safe. Therefore, we must have a disposition and demeanor that offsets initial resistance to the Gospel by exuding the grace, care, and acceptance that the Gospel offers. This makes the Gospel both clear and compelling. The best way we can do this is to fulfill the greatest commandment of "loving our neighbor" and doing so with the intention of sharing how the love of God – revealed in the Gospel – has motivated us.

The best way to display the results of the Gospel in your life, so as to share the Gospel in the lives of others, is to **focus on being the very best neighbor in your everyday world.** For example, it means being the best co-worker you can be. This means working hard at your job (displaying a spirit of contribution), but also being a relational change agent with the people with whom you work. Ask how they are doing, see if you can help them out, inquire about their life story, and celebrate their victories at work. If we're talking about the neighborhood you live in, it means really being aware of the needs, hurts, interests, and hobbies of those who live near you. It may mean bringing a meal to someone who has just had a baby, mowing the lawn of a person who is overwhelmed, having a BBQ or wine party with the immediate households on your street, sitting out on the front porch instead of the back (to welcome others over), being the house that always has the neighborhood kids over, or bringing a "welcome to the neighborhood" dish to a new neighbor. Your neighbor can be a fellow student, the person next to you at the range, the lady who's always at the gym when you are, the checker at the store and the like. Whoever your "neighbor" is, hospitality is the order of the day so as to show how Jesus has welcomed us. All of this is intentional, to create openings by which we can share how our lives are oriented around Jesus. This is the goal of our dispositions of grace: to invite others to consider the grace that has touched our lives.

When it comes to "the invite", perhaps the best way is to invite them to church, a church event, or youth group with you. The numbers tell us that **most people begin following Jesus because someone they had come to trust and admire invited them to church.** People are more willing to come to church if they think church is filled with people similar them and welcoming of where they are coming from in life. Thus, the more we display Jesus in a way that is "down to earth" the more people are likely to feel receptive when it comes to accepting our invitation to **come and see** what church is all about.

1. What are some things that people do that tend to turn you off to a relationship verses what are the things that cause you to be more open to handing out?

2. Based on the last question, what are some ways you can think of to create opportunities for Christ-centered hospitality: either at work, at school, or in the neighborhood where you live?

3. How can we as Followers In Training exceed the expectations of what love is in a culture that thinks they are more loving than Christians?

4. What are some “non-weirdo” ways to invite a person to come to church?

5. Who do you plan on intentionally investing into so as to see them come to Jesus?

6. What are some of the “road blocks” you think they may face when it comes to Christianity and how can you help them through those?

**Quick Tips:**

- Ask people about their life story.
- Think through how you would share your story with others.
- Be the home in your area that is always inviting others over.
- Be quick to meet the tangible needs of those around you.

## FIT Lifestyle Goal 7

# FIT People Live Out Their Life Roles Biblically.

*"For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit."*  
- Jesus

One of the greatest of all stumbling blocks modern non-religious people have revolves around the idea of Christian hypocrisy. And it's understandable. No one is inspired by or seeks advice from a person who doesn't live out what they espouse. What is interesting is that the Bible agrees with this. Throughout the Bible we see that **Christianity isn't simply about what we confess, but how God converts**. It's about how the Gospel delivers us from an old, broken way of living and transforms us with a joy-filled thriving for life (Colossians 1:13-14). It is this transformation which authenticates the reality that Jesus does, in fact, shape all the facets of our everyday lives. What this means for us as people living out the **FIT Lifestyle** is that Jesus seeks to cultivate, and gives empowerment for living like Him in various areas of our lives, such as at home, at work and in society. And when pursued, our behavior and tone in these areas function as an agent of missional attractiveness, which can inspire the culture around us, "so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16).

**Home:** In the home, we see that both the relationship within the Trinity and the nature of the Gospel is manifested in the context of marriage. Just as God is mysteriously three-in-one, so too a husband and wife are mysteriously two-in-one (Matthew 28:19-20 & Ephesians 5:31-32). Just as Jesus submitted to the Father, so too a wife submits to her husband in the Lord (Ephesians 5:22-24). Just as Jesus sacrificed himself for us, so too a husband lays down his life for his wife. We see also that kids are to obey their parents, just as all believers obey God in anticipation for His blessing (Ephesians 6:1-3). We also see that parents are never to crush their kid's spirit just as Jesus lifts the crushing weight of failure off our spirit (Ephesians 6:4 & Matthew 11:28-30). Therefore, a Christian home is a place where both God and Gospel are to be on display as we submit our lives to His design for living.

**Work:** In the work place the Christian always keeps before them the knowledge that they work for Jesus and not their employer or employees (Colossians 3:23-4:1). Thus, everything they do is driven through the filter of seeking to please Jesus by working hard, honest, and productively. In doing so, this establishes a workplace reputation of dependability, which in turn can open up avenues to share why they work as conscientiously as they do. People in general respect competency, character, and creativity, all of which provide opportunity for highlighting our faith.

**Society:** The goal of *the Christian is not to stir up strife, but rather to stir up love and reconciliation*. Thus, in the context of our society our ambition is to fulfill the God ordained role of peacemaking (Matthew 5:9), welfare building (Jeremiah 29:7), and culture shaping investment (Jeremiah 29:4-6, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, 1 Peter 2:13-17 & 1 Peter 3:8-11).

1. Looking at Ephesians 5:21-33 & 1 Peter 3:1-7, highlight some things that embody a Gospel-centered marriage?

(A) Ephesians 5:21-33:

(B) 1 Peter 3:1-7:

2. Looking at Ephesians 6:1-4 and Deuteronomy 6:4-6 what are some things we are to do to raise our kids in a FIT Lifestyle?

(A) Ephesians 6:1-4

(B) Deuteronomy 6:4-7

3. What are some of the dispositions and actions we are to live out in our work environments when looking at Ephesians 6:5-9 & Titus 2:9-10?

(A) Ephesians 6:5-9

(B) Titus 2:9-10

4. How can we display Jesus in a productive way to our society when we look at Jeremiah 29:1-7, Titus 3:1-2 & 1 Peter 2:13-17?

(A) Jeremiah 29:1-7

(B) Titus 3:1-2

(C) 1 Peter 2:13-17

**Quick Tips:**

- Read and listen to great resources on biblical marriage, parenting, and work as constant refreshers.
- See your family and occupation as opportunities to display your faith.

## FIT Lifestyle Goal 8

# FIT People Give Their Money Generously.

*"No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."*

- Jesus

***Jesus is a generous God who has saved people to be generous.*** It is this generosity that is among one of our most noticeable characteristics. The motivations and dispositions for this generosity run deep.

When it comes to motive, the reason Jesus advocates for such a radical generosity is because such displays of charity reveal the true nature of transformed people who have "freely received and thus freely give" (Matthew 10:8). In Matthew 6:21 Jesus put it this way, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." The implication for this is simple: if we lack a generous heart we will lack generous giving. If we lack trust in God's provision and promises, we will lack following through on the steps that cause us to rely on his provision and promises. However, when we do give our financial resources to His Kingdom purposes it reveals (A) that the Gospel has taken root in our bones and displaced the temptation to find security, worth, or love in money. (B) It shows that our faith is of such a nature that we truly believe giving is an investment that accrues interest for eternity and not simply a divesting of money in this life (Matthew 6:19-20). And (C) it demonstrates an internal realization of the fact that everything we have is from God anyway, and thus we give back to Him a portion of everything He has given to us (Deuteronomy 8:17-18).

As to our disposition in giving, the **FIT Lifestyle** is one in which joy, thankfulness, and generosity is interlaced in the offering. Now, in saying generosity we're not necessarily saying the biggest giver is the most generous. In Mark 12:41-43 we see where a poor widow gave two coins that equaled a penny, and yet Jesus considered her to be the most generous giver of the day because she gave all she had in faith toward God. What this reveals is that generosity is relative to what we have and why we give it. If we have much and give little, that is an anemic generosity. But if we have little, but give of the little we have, it's converted into a priceless treasure before God. In 2 Corinthians 8:1-4 we see the same thing when Paul writes, "We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, <sup>2</sup>for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. <sup>3</sup>For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, <sup>4</sup>begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints." Here, we see not only an over the top generosity during a season of extreme poverty, but also a joy in giving that runs so deep they are begging for the opportunity to be generous. They desire this because they are so profoundly thankful for the grace of God that has changed their lives (2 Corinthians 9:12). That is the power and effect of the transformed life. It experiences and expresses joy, thankfulness, and generosity in the giving.

1. Most of us are financially well off when compared to global and historical standards. Based on this what are some of the things that 1 Timothy 6:17-19 calls us to do?

(A) In 1 Timothy 6:17

(B) In 1 Timothy 6:18

(C) In 1 Timothy 6:19

2. What are some of the common reasons/fears that cause us to struggle in giving, whether it be generously, consistently, or at all?

3. What are some of the promises that are given to us when we choose to take giving seriously?

(A) In 2 Corinthians 9:6-12

(B) In Matthew 6:24-33

4. What do you believe God is calling you to do when it comes to joyful, thankful generosity?

5. What are things you plan to implement to make that possible?

**Quick Tips:**

- Don't wait until generosity is affordable, start today.
- Keep track of your giving over a 6-month cycle and see if/how God provides uniquely over that period of time.

## FIT Lifestyle Goal 9

# FIT People Serve Others Willingly.

*"If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."*

- Jesus

In the Gospel of Mark, we see Jesus' bold declaration for why He came into the world when He said, "the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45). This act is not only how Jesus saved people, but it also stands as the example we are to live out in our own lives. FIT people serve people. How a person serves others is as diverse and varied as the number of people there are in the world. Each of us is wired by God with different gifts, abilities, interests, associations, and experiences which coalesce to create a uniquely designed template for serving others. For some, they will serve through displaying mercy to those who are hurting. For others, it may be teaching those who seek to grow. Still yet for others, it may be about administration in a context that seeks order or direction. Some of this service may be inside the church, with things like kid's ministry or set-up crews, while other elements may be in the heart of our community serving on school boards or with civic groups. *Where* and *how* a person serves is not nearly as critical as the idea *that* they serve.

What is important in our serving one another is the attitude with which we serve. ***We are not volunteers who give our time to others as a form of charity. Rather we are servants who invest into others with the time God has given to us,*** as a tribute to Jesus, who served us. What this means is that sometimes we may be treated like a servant by those whom we are seeking to serve. That's ok. It may not feel ok, but it is because at the end of the day we aren't actually serving others as much as we are serving Jesus through the context of others.

1. In Philippians 2:3-4 we see a series of ideas that pertain to our attitude in serving others. What does this section teach us about the servant's heart?

(A) Philippians 2:3

(B) Philippians 2:4

2. Sometimes serving people isn't simply about doing for others, but also about being there for others. What are ways we can serve people (both inside and outside the church) by being there for them?

3. In the church, we tend to think of serving as something that only happens in relationship to the defined ministries of the organization. Yet, at Redemption Church we believe that each person is called by God to customized acts of service as He places ideas on peoples' hearts. Some may be defined ministries, while others are created as people begin to act. If there were no constraints or hurdles, what are some things you may be feeling God is calling you to do that would serve others?

4. What are the things that would need to happen for you to act on that which you think God may be calling you to do?

5. According to Ephesians 4:11-15, how does serving others ultimately serve our own spiritual growth?

6. If you are not serving others currently, then what do you think Jesus would ask you to do?

**Quick Tips:**

- Think through an area in the church that you are interested in and begin to serve in that context.
- Look for area area of need outside of the church and begin to fill that need.

## FIT Lifestyle Goal 10

# FIT People Face Life's Realities Joyfully.

*"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."*  
- Jesus

When Jesus was born into the world the angelic emissary stated, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." (Luke 2:10). Joy is the gift that Jesus brought from heaven to us. Consequently, joy is to be the gift we bring to the world around us since Jesus has bestowed it in us.

There are many things in the world that grab people's attention, but nothing is more powerful than a person who exudes a fearless, relentless, infectious, unshakable joy. It is that communicable quality which causes even the deepest skeptic to take notice. As followers of Jesus, joy is our greatest missional tool since it offers the people around us something that this world cannot provide. Now, to be fair, the world can provide happiness, fun, distraction, and gratification, but joy-fueled satisfaction is remarkably elusive. The reason is because joy finds its origins outside of the confines of the world in which we live. Galatians 5:22 states that it is *the Holy Spirit who generates* joy in the life of the believer. Romans 15:13 says it is *God who fills us* with all joy. And in John 17:13, Jesus said that He spoke God's word so that *His joy may be fulfilled in us. **The whole of the Trinity transplants their joy into us so that we might display that joy to those around us.***

The challenge for us living out the **FIT Lifestyle** is not connected to the potency of God's joy, but rather in how we access the joy that is given to us. He has given the access and opportunity, but we must sync our lives up with the means by which joy is experienced and grows. Below are a series of questions that are connected to the ways in which we invite a context for deeper joy.

1. Looking at John 15:10-11 what is one of the key traits that must be present in our lives so as to experience true joy?
2. Looking at Philippians 4:4 would you say joy is an emotional reaction to good things or a command of resilience that is to be acted on?
3. Looking carefully at Philippians 4:4-9 what are some of the different things we are to proactively engage in when times are difficult, and yet joy is still to be sought and acted on?
4. Often times we tend to think that a positive change in circumstance is the only way to engage an optimistic shift toward joy. However, God-given joy is to exist regardless of the conditions we are facing in life. Looking at Philippians 4:11-13 what is to be the center of our unshakable joy?
5. Based on the above questions, how would you explain to another person how to engage with the joy that has been deposited in our lives by God?

6. What are ways you can leverage joy as an everyday missionary at work, school, in your neighborhood, etc?

**Quick Tips:**

- Make the conscious decision to thank God - out loud - every single day.
- When feeling overwhelmed, discouraged, or worried immediately shift from processing to praying.
- Develop boundaries for those voices in your life that stir frustration, pessimism, and discouragement, and in their place seek relationships that foster faith.