



Our Mission

Where is God Taking Us? Week 1

September 9, 2018

LEARNING GOALS

- Orient Life Group members to this 6-week series.
- Understand why a mission statement is vital for a church.
- Understand the biblical foundation of Bellevue's Mission.
- Understand how Bellevue's Mission makes an impact on us as individuals and as a Life Group.

OUTLINE

1. **INTRODUCTION - "WHERE IS GOD TAKING US?" SERIES**
2. **OUR MISSION**
 - i. Why does a church need a mission statement?
 - a. Guiding Compass
 - ii. What is Bellevue's Mission?
 - a. Love God, Love People, Share Jesus, Make Disciples
 - iii. What is the biblical basis of Bellevue's Mission?
 - a. Great Commandment—Matt. 22:37–39
 - b. Great Commission—Matt. 28:18–20
 - iv. What does Bellevue's Mission mean to me?
 - a. It starts in me!
 - v. How does Bellevue's Mission make an impact in our Life Group?
 - a. Life Group Assessment results regarding our Mission

INTRODUCTION

In 2011 our Pastor, staff, and lay leaders sought the Lord in a fresh way to uncover where God was taking us as a church. Eighteen months later, greater clarity emerged providing Bellevue with a common frame of reference for where God is taking us together.

We call it our Vision Frame—a master tool made up of 5 components artistically displayed on the storyboard.

*(Teachers, point to the **Vision Frame storyboard**.)*

Our Vision Frame has four sides that frame where we believe God is taking our church. These sides define **what** we are doing, **why** we do what we do, **how** we get involved and **when** we are on target. The center of the frame is our Vision, a work of God so wonderful you'll want to be a part of it!

Over the next six Sundays, we will answer the question: **Where is God Taking Us?** The goal of this series is to align and refresh our direction as a Life Group with the Lord's direction for our church. We will engage all elements of the Vision. We are about to get our frame on!

In this week's lesson we focus on our Mission.

OUR MISSION

Why does a church need a mission statement?

Does anyone work for, or associate with, an organization that has a mission statement (other than Bellevue)? What is the mission statement of your organization?

Why does your organization have a mission statement? What would happen if your organization did not have a mission statement?

Companies must answer the question, "What business are we in?" Their answer provides the framework for how they conduct business. Any purposeful organization must define their direction.

Around 1190, the Chinese first began to use a device to navigate direction. The device held a magnetic needle mounted on a low-friction pivot point allowing it to move easily. The earth's magnetic field pulled the north end of the needle toward the North Pole. The needle settled into its equilibrium orientation and pointed toward the north allowing users to then determine direction.

Can anyone guess what I am referring to?

Yes! This device is a compass. Since the 12th century, the compass has been used all over the world to point out a way of direction.

Has anyone ever used a compass? What did you use it for and how did it work?

(Teachers, you could ask attendees to open the “Compass” app on their phones and try to find true north.)

A mission statement is essentially a compass. Organizations use mission statements to set their bearing and define their direction.

Why do you think a church needs a mission statement?

A mission statement serves as a guiding compass of a church, aligning everyone along the same path scripturally and defining what the church is to do.

God, Himself, called people on mission.

Genesis 12 opens saying, *“Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you; ² and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; ³ and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.’”*

Also, in **Exodus 3:10**, God said to Moses, *“So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”*

Jesus was on mission during His time on earth.

Please turn to **Luke 9:51-56**, where we get a glimpse of how intently Jesus was pointed in a certain direction.

Someone please read verses 51-56.

⁵¹ *As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, **Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.*** ⁵² *And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him;* ⁵³ *but the people there did not welcome him, because **he was***

heading for Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?” ⁵⁵ But Jesus turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶ **Then he and his disciples went to another village.**

These verses allow us to see Jesus’ mission. He “*resolutely set out*” to accomplish what the Father called Him to do. Jesus did not allow rejection or ideas from His disciples to draw Him off course.

A mission statement expresses a direction and points everyone along the same path. Every church should have a mission statement that defines its direction.

(Point to the **compass** on the Vision Frame storyboard.)

Bellevue has a mission statement. It is our guiding compass that defines “What we are doing” as a church.

What is Bellevue’s Mission?

(Point to our **mission statement** on the Vision Frame storyboard.)

Can anyone quote our mission statement? Love God, Love People, Share Jesus, and Make Disciples!

What do you like about Bellevue’s Mission?

What would be at stake for Bellevue if we did not have a mission? (lack of unity, just existing, not accomplishing anything, not focused, chasing a multitude of agendas)

Our Mission may sound simple, but it guides everything we do and flows from the mission of Jesus Himself.

What is the biblical basis of Bellevue’s Mission?

Can anyone tell us which biblical texts our Mission comes from?

Our Mission comes from the words of Jesus found in the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

Turn to Matthew 22.

Would someone please read Matthew 22:34-39?

³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ ‘Teacher,

which is the great commandment in the Law?’³⁷ And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’³⁸ This is the great and first commandment.³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.’”

What did Jesus say was the greatest commandment in the law? (To Love God)

The first aspect of Bellevue’s Mission is to Love God (Matthew 22:34-38).

The Pharisees came back to Jesus after the Sadducees failed to trap Him. They asked, “What is the greatest commandment?” They hoped Jesus would stumble on the 613 commands in the law and say something that would supersede the word of Moses.

Jesus, however, answered their question by quoting Moses from one of the most well known passages of the Old Testament, the Shema.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5: *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”*

What does it mean to Love God?

Jesus’ response makes it clear that love for God is the foundation for everything a believer does. This reply astounded the lawyer by its simplicity. “You shall love the Lord your God” reduced all of man’s attempts to please God to useless rubble. Gone are the fruitless requirements of man-made systems. Gone are the ornate rooms, which leave the heart cold. Gone are the laborious rituals that foster no communion. Gone are the ramblings of double-minded men, unstable in all their ways. The command does not promote religion but offers a relationship. Individuals are invited to personally, willfully love God.

Jesus called the lawyer (and us) to love God with all of our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind.

How does a person love God with all of their heart, soul, and mind? What does this practically look like in a day of a believer?

Ripley's Believe It or Not says the longest love letter ever written was written in 1875 from a Parisian painter Marcel de Leclure to Magdalena de Villeray. He was so in love

with her that he wanted to write, “je t'aime” (sounds like “zhuh tem”), “I love you” in French, a thousand times for every year. It was 1875, so he wrote “je t'aime” one million eight hundred seventy-five thousand times. And not being a fool he hired a secretary to do it. But, he did not want to diminish his expression of his love, so he did not tell her to write it one million eight hundred seventy-five thousand times, but rather he dictated each one separately. Thus, he said the sentence and she wrote it one million eight hundred and seventy-five thousand times. And Ripley concludes, "Never was love made manifest by as great an expenditure of time and effort."

However, God loved us magnificently greater when He sent His son, Christ! When we love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, we love more than Marcel loved Magdalena.

Let's look at the heart, soul, and mind separately. Throughout the Bible, the word for heart (*kardia*) encompasses the physical, emotional, and spiritual life of human beings. The heart is the source of our feelings and emotions. Feelings such as joy, sorrow, depression, despair, happiness, and cheerfulness originate in the heart. To love God with all your heart means to love him deeply and personally—like the love shared between a father and son or a husband and wife.

The word soul (*nephesh*) refers to the entire life of a person—your sleeping, eating, work, and family life. Your soul includes both who and what you are. If someone were to ask you who you are, you might respond with your name. But your name doesn't fully describe you. To be more specific, you could include your profession, your hobbies, your family, etc. Most importantly, you could describe your relationship to Jesus. When you love God with all your soul, this love defines your life.

Jesus uses a word that is a bit different in the Shema. He says to love God with all your mind. The mind (an English word translating several Greek or Hebrew terms) is the center for intellectual activity, our thinking and learning. Loving God with all your mind implies centering your thoughts on Him—learning and growing in our capacity to fathom His vastness, mystery, power, love, grace, and beauty.

When we put the three pieces together, the passage explodes with significance. Essentially, Jesus is saying to love God with all of yourself—every fiber of your being. That's quite a command. It's hard enough to love a spouse or child whom we can see and touch. How can we love God, whom we cannot see, with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength? Only with His help.

“Delight yourself in the Lord, And He will give you the desires of your heart” Psalm 37:4. Many people assume that by showing God lip service He will give them everything they want. But that’s not what God is saying. Instead, if we delight ourselves in Him—if we make Him the desire of our heart—then, and only then, He will give us what our heart desires. He will give us Himself.

Hopefully it’s becoming obvious why Jesus said that this is the greatest commandment.

What did Jesus say was the second greatest commandment in the law? (Love your neighbor as yourself.)

The second aspect of Bellevue’s mission is Love People! (Matthew 22:39-40)

During Jesus’ lifetime, rabbis often argued over the meaning of the word neighbor. For most, a neighbor was a Jew who strictly observed the Law. Non-Jews were hated and considered enemies. Jesus sought to broaden their definition of neighbor. Through the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus revealed that any person with a need is our neighbor. The underlying question isn’t, “Who is my neighbor?” but rather, “Am I being a neighbor?” Loving your neighbor means loving the people around you—all of them.

Loving our neighbor is second in importance to loving God because loving people is an extension of our love for God. The two commandments are entwined. Loving people is the visible manifestation of loving God.

Henry Blackaby said: “A test of your love for God is to examine your love for others.”

How should our love for God make an impact on the way we love people?

Our love for people should not only come from our love for God but also imitate the love God has shown us. He loved us sacrificially, selflessly, and unconditionally.

Ultimately, we love people best when we offer the same loving relationship we received from God to others.

This leads us to the next two parts of the Mission which comes from Matthew 28:18-20, commonly referred to as the Great Commission.

Turn to Matthew 28.

Would someone please read **Matthew 28:18-20**?

"¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"

You may be thinking, "I see 'Make Disciples' in these verses but where is 'Share Jesus?'"

When Jesus tells His followers to go, make, baptize, and teach He was using all the ingredients essential to evangelism. In order to clarify the necessity of evangelism in fulfilling the Great Commission, "Share Jesus" was named as the third aspect of Bellevue's Mission.

We spent the month of August focusing on Building Relationships and Sharing Jesus. What was the one insight you took away from our lessons and/or visits?

Sharing Jesus is at the core of what it means to follow Him and to be His disciple. A maturing Christian wants to know Christ better and to make Him known to others. In other words, if you're a Christian, you aren't satisfied to know *about* Christ. You want to know Him through an intimate, genuine relationship with Him. He's your Lord, your Savior, your Master, and your best friend and you want to spend time with Him. Bro. Steve often says, "You want to spend time with those you love." As a natural overflow of your love for Jesus, you want to make Him known to others by telling others about Him.

Matthew 4:19 is placed at the very beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry. He's calling His disciples to Himself for the very first time. Jesus is walking along the shore at the Sea of Galilee when He comes up to Peter and Andrew and says, *"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

Jesus was inviting them to follow Him, walk with Him, learn from Him, and believe Him. As a result, they would gain His heart for others. As they left their nets behind, and followed Jesus, Jesus changed the passions of their hearts. No longer were they fishing for fish, they were fishing for men by sharing Jesus.

A second example is in **Mark 3:14**. *"And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach."*

Do you see the intentionality? The relationship comes before the deployment! *“...that they might be with him and then he might send them out to preach.”* (underline added).

To follow Jesus we must be willing to Share Jesus through intentional evangelism. Developing a growing relationship with Jesus and spending time with Him are the fuel for sharing Jesus.

Does anyone have a story about recent opportunities you have had to share the gospel?

Dr. Roy Fish defines evangelism as “the compassionate sharing of the good news of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit with lost people with the purpose of winning them to Christ as Savior and Lord that they in turn might share Him with others”.

The fact is that lost people must hear the gospel in order to repent, believe, and receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior. We, as believers, are the primary way the name of Jesus is shared with a lost and dying world.

As we studied in August, we must share Jesus by verbally communicating the gospel, using Scripture, and calling for a decision.

The passage goes on to tell us that we should make disciples of all nations. Therefore, we are to Share Jesus in Memphis and beyond:

- In Memphis, Shelby County, and the Mid-South
- In the United States
- Around the World

Jesus not only calls us to share the gospel with the lost, we are to Make Disciples. This is the fourth and final aspect of our Mission.

Someone please read the first part of Matthew 28:19.

When sharing Jesus results in a new Christ follower, we need to nurture them in their faith. The command to make disciples does not stop after someone makes a profession of faith.

Acts 14:21 reads, *“After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch.”* This verse illustrates

making disciples follows preaching of the gospel. Just as a baby needs care to mature, a new believer needs help to mature as well.

What two ways, found in verses Acts 14:19-20, does Jesus tell us to carry out the task of making disciples?

These verses describe the two steps for making disciples: baptizing and teaching them to obey Jesus' commands. The first step, baptism, provides the opportunity to make one's faith in Christ known to others. The second, obedience, is an ongoing opportunity to grow in faith and to mature in our new relationship with Christ.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ." The process of discipleship keeps Christ at the forefront of our lives as well as those we disciple.

To "make disciples of all nations" requires some people to leave their homelands, but Jesus' main focus is for all believers to duplicate themselves wherever they live.

Discipleship is not complete until the disciple is a disciple maker!

Paul describes the complete cycle of discipleship in **2 Timothy 2:1-2**, "...what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also."

To fulfill the command of discipleship we each need three types of people in our lives:

- We need a 'Paul' to teach us.
- We need a 'Barnabas' to encourage us.
- We need a 'Timothy' to teach.

If you've been disciplined personally, can you share your discipleship experience? Is anyone currently in a discipleship group at Bellevue? Describe this experience.

Are you actively seeking to disciple others? Do you have a 'Paul', a 'Barnabas', and a 'Timothy' in your life?

If you would like to learn more about Bellevue's disciple making opportunities you can call the church office and speak with Bill Street, Pastor of Evangelism and Discipleship.

Bellevue has a biblically based mission that brings clarity to what Jesus wants us to do as a church family.

What does Bellevue's Mission mean to me?

What does Bellevue's Mission mean to you? How does our Mission help you in your Christian life?

(Please share what Bellevue's Mission means to you personally.)

Our Mission speaks to us in two ways.

First, Bellevue's Mission encourages spiritual growth through obedience to the Lord. Although the Bible contains an abundance of direction, our eight-word mission statement helps narrow our focus.

Second, Bellevue's Mission describes the kind of person God calls us to be. Without clear direction, we often settle for something less than the biblical standard and certainly less than we are capable of as Spirit-filled people!

What are some of the most popular Sunday afternoon restaurants in Memphis?

Let's say you are at ___(insert a restaurant name)___ after church today and you ask the server how you can pray for him/her. Afterward, you invite her to Bellevue. She is familiar with Bellevue but asks what we are doing in that large church. How would you answer her?

*(Teachers, please head back to the storyboard and **point to our mission statement.**)*

A great way to answer would be, "We are learning to Love God, Love People, Share Jesus and Make Disciples, that's the kind of people we believe God is calling us to be!" That's pointing straight to our Mission!

How seriously do you accept Bellevue's Mission personally? Do you adopt the Great Commandment and the Great Commission as a compass for your life?

(Teacher, distribute this week's homework: the 4x4 postcard.)

I'd like to encourage you to take some time this week to ask the Lord how you can live out our Mission, practically and personally. This graph, called the "4x4", contains the

four aspects of our Mission. Circle ONE of the four aspects of our Mission where you most want to grow in the remainder of 2018. Please keep the card in your Bible, as we will refer back to it again.

(Teacher, take one 4x4 card and with a large marker circle "Love God", including the four Measures underneath, to show an example of what you are asking people to do.)

Consider these additional suggestions:

- Pray and refocus your life around His Great Commandment and Great Commission.
- How can you view your everyday activities as a way to align with the Mission? Praying for personal obedience is Loving God. Serving your family is Loving People. Inviting a neighbor for dinner is Sharing Jesus. Mentoring a youth is Making Disciples. View daily activities through the lens of the Mission.
- Display Bellevue's Mission in a public place and look for opportunities to open a conversation with others.
- Notice where Bellevue's Mission is displayed around church.
- Write your own "elevator speech" (1 minute or less) explaining Bellevue's Mission and share it with someone this week.
- Send an encouraging note, text, or email to someone who does a great job modeling Bellevue's Mission.
- Begin to own the thought, "Bellevue's Mission starts in me!"

How does Bellevue's Mission make an impact in our Life Group?

Share how Bellevue's Mission can make an impact in your Life Group.

Bro. Steve has often commented, "Life Groups are how our Mission is mobilized!" Each of our 120+ Adult Life Groups can carry Bellevue's Mission forward in word and deed.

(Teachers please point to the mission statement on the storyboard and say:) We should lead our Life Group in accordance with Bellevue's Mission. We can make a great impact in Memphis and beyond by living out the Mission personally and as a community.

(Review your Vision Frame Assessment results in advance to be prepared to discuss with your class)

You were invited to participate in a class assessment. By reviewing the anonymous results, I learned more about our class as a group and how we view the Vision Frame.

- I learned that when thinking of the Vision Frame, the majority of us think about ___(*Teacher, identify the highest ranked Vision Frame element from question 1 on your assessment. It will probably be our Mission.*)___. Our Mission is the most common church-wide answer as Mission is what we hear about the most.
- Also, I learned that the one aspect of our Mission that the majority of us want the Lord to help us make progress in next year is ___(*Teacher, this is from question 2 of your Life Group's Vision Frame assessment*)__.

Your responses are valuable and help provide insight as we work through this series entitled, "Where is God Taking Us?" We will spend the next several weeks looking at our Values, Strategy, Measures, and Vision. We will conclude by refreshing our Life Group's alignment with the Lord's direction for our class and our church! See ya next Sunday!

(Teacher, close the class in prayer.)

Compiled by Brady Fortenberry with Tim Shelton, *Adult Ministry Pastors*

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