



The 5
Invitations

Every Pastor

Must
Master

by **Nelson Searcy**

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TRANSCRIPT



MEET DR. NELSON SEARCY



Nelson is the Founding and Lead Pastor of The Journey Church, with locations across New York City and in Boca Raton, FL. By God's grace, Nelson identified and developed the **Eight Systems of a Healthy Church®** that he has used to coach over 3,500

churches in the US and around the world to adapt those eight systems to their uniqueness in ministry fields, resulting in great health and growth. He regularly coaches pastors online and in-person through the **Church Leader Insights** and the **Renegade Pastors Network** ministries that he founded. He also leads several annual pastor in-person conferences and online training events. In ministry for more than 25 years, Nelson and his church routinely appear on lists such as "The 50 Most Influential Churches" and "The 25 Most Innovative Leaders." He is the author of over 100 church growth resources and 20+ books, including *The Renegade Pastor: Abandoning Average in Your Life and Ministry*, *The Difference Maker* and *Fusion: Turning First-Time Guests into Fully-Engaged Members of Your Church*. Nelson is the recipient of the prestigious Donald A. McGavran Award for Outstanding Leadership in Great Commission Research. He is a longtime student of church history, especially mastering the areas of evangelism and church growth. Nelson divides his time between NYC and South Florida. He battled Stage 4 cancer and has been cancer-free since 2018, praise God! He has an amazing wife, Kelley, and a teenage son, Alexander, who continues to grow in so many ways.

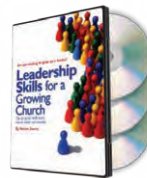
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All right, glad to have you with us for this afternoon's session. For my talk, I want to examine five invitations every pastor must master. And I want to talk about the power of making the ask, the A-S-K. And when you study scripture, you see that Jesus loved to ask questions, but he also used the invitation to draw people to himself. One of the most famous passages on that is when Jesus calls out the two brothers Simon, who we know as Peter, and then Simon's brother Andrew, and it says, Jesus called out to them. So I like that word, called out, he's exhorted to them. He said, with power, with passion, with purpose, he said, come follow me. And then he gives a little benefit and he says that I'll show you how to fish for people. So he adapted his invitation to Simon and Andrew because they were fishermen.

But then he extended a very bold and clear invitation to come follow me. And of course, since that happened in probably around 30 AD or so, plus or minus, since that has happened, that invitation, God is still extending to the power of His Holy Spirit to people all around the world, and many of you, I hope, all of you, have answered that call, that invitation that Jesus gives when he says, come follow me. But in this case, notice his adaptation to the situation, but also notice that he called out. It was a clear, it was a compelling, it was a concise invitation. So just to get your mind thinking about inviting people to do things, making the ask. And then, I know this is in reference to prayer, it's in reference to us talking to God, but I think it also has a universal application, like so much of scripture, there's the immediate application, the specific application, but then certain scriptures, as you know, have a universal application.

And I think that without twisting the scripture, we can apply this to what we're talking about today where Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount in relation to prayer, he said, keep on asking and you'll receive what you ask for, keep on seeking and you will find, keep on knocking and the door will be opened. So a mark of a growing Christian and a good Christian is perseverance in prayer. But I also believe it's perseverance when it comes to extending the five invitations every pastor must master. And so what are these five invitations? And then how do we make the big ask? So what I'm going to do in just a moment is I'm going to go one by one through each of the five invitations. And I showed you earlier how these are going to help you reach more people for Christ, that's going to help you move more people into membership.

I was going to raise up new volunteers, perhaps call out the called in your church to be pastors of missionaries and then help you increase your baptisms. And so that's where we're going with these five invitations. And in essence, what I am hoping to do is I'm hoping to teach you how to be a master asker. Now with that in mind, let me tell you that if you don't know, I spent most of my life battling a speech impediment. Now I say most of my life battling it because since about age 33 or so, I have pretty much overcome it. It almost never pops up anymore, but especially when I was a kid and then going into my early teen years, I had a speech impediment. So even though, according to the Myers-Briggs, I do have extrovert leanings, although the older I get, the more introverted I have become.

And I am a loner in a lot of ways. But I will say, having the speech impediment, it did impact, early on my willingness to speak up, my willingness to maybe be as aggressive as I needed to be, and it hindered my willingness to make the ask, to be a good asker. Now, you may also know from my story that around age 13, I sold my first computer program and then I started a computer business shortly thereafter. And I had some good early success. I sold some early programs to the United States Post Office and I had a lot of success. At age 16, I was selected as one of the young entrepreneurs, one of the top 10 young entrepreneurs in the nation by the Reagan administration. And I remember during all of this time, I'm trying to overcome this speech impediment, and I'm trying to get better at being able to verbalize what I think and what I feel, and I'm still working on it today.

But back then, one of the issues that I had is I could not pronounce kuh sounds. Kuh, kuh, kuh, did a lot of work on just being able to say what I just said to you. So for example, I would say, you have a very lovely at, may I pet your at? Will your at bite me? Will it scratch me? And in my mind, it sounded like cat, kuh. I thought I was saying cat, but it was coming out just like I said it to you. So as you might imagine, there were certain words that I really worked to avoid. And one of those words was ask because if you forget the kuh sound at the end of the word ask, you're going to end up making a big ask of yourself, okay, did I get the word right? So I have to say I've had a long time relationship with this word but also, I've had a long relationship with learning to actually do asking, to ask for what I want.

So I'm starting this computer business and I've sold these programs and I fell into some other success. And a lot of my early success in the computer programming just kind of came through some innovations I brought into the tracking and the particular coding that I was doing and all of that. So it came pretty easy, but then it got to the point where I had to ask people to use my stuff, to buy my computer programs or to allow me to sell them on what I was doing. And I remember one time, very early on, I get out of school, I'm in high school, so I get out of school at three o'clock and I have an appointment at four o'clock with the lady who is the head of the computers for this regional electric membership corporation. You know what I'm talking about? Maybe you have one of those?

A lot of rural areas have these membership corporations. They're not part of a big Georgia Power or Southern Company or Duke Energy or Edison, Con Edison or something, they're independent electrical buyers that resell at a discount maybe to rural areas or whatever. And this would've been a pretty significant deal for me. So I dressed up in the best clothes that I had and changed from my school clothes to the best clothes that I had, which is not that great, but I had some nicer clothes and I went to this big office building, totally intimidated. I sit down with this lady and she has everything that you might expect that I was fearful for. I could build no rapport with her. I could not get her to laugh. It was all straight business. But she liked my proposal and she liked what I had presented and seemed very interested, thinking it would really help their business for me to do this computer programming project with them.

And so as I sat there and there was this long silence and I just kind of mumbled under my breath like, what? What? And she said, are you going to ask me for the sale? And I said Mrs., and I've actually forgotten her name over time. Her first name is Judy. I do remember that. I said, Mrs. Judy, would you buy my computer programming services? And that actually began a pretty significant relationship that we had over the next few years. And I thought about that so many times, like she told me I had to ask for what I wanted. So I was good at presenting. I was sort of good at laying out the benefits and the features, if you will, but I was not good at making that ask. And since then I've thought long and hard and studied long and hard and have actually developed a number of resources back in the church planting days, when I used to teach church planting.

But even something I'll talk about today, learning to ask. And I've had to, like you, overcome my fear of asking. And I'm going to deal with that a little bit later. But let me fast-forward now. I'm in college, I'm pursuing an electrical engineering degree. I'm on a full scholarship. I'm working for the school, training their other professors on how to use the computer system and different things. And I'm in my little apartment, I lived off campus, and I needed a new pair of blue jeans. And in those days you had to go to the mall, to the store and buy things. I don't know if you remember when there used to be shopping malls. Do you remember those, back in the old days, you know? You didn't go online and buy stuff, you had to go to a place then park and go in. Well, the closest shopping mall to me was about 30 minutes across town. And so I had a very specific size that I needed and it was just a little unusual to find that size. They didn't

always have my particular size because I was rather tall and I have longer legs from my waist size and a couple of things. And so I thought to myself, I could save myself a lot of time by calling over to the store at the mall, trying to get a sales rep on the phone and ask them, do you have these jeans in this size? But instead, I was still, at this point, after that situation with the electrical membership lady, I was still afraid of asking. So I instead spent over an hour and a half driving across town, going in, only to be disappointed to find out that they did not have my size. Now they were able to order it and I came back over the weekend and picked it up and all that, that's irrelevant.

But when I got back, I thought, never again. Never again. I am going to work on overcoming my fear of asking. And had a good friend at the time who was an advisor and a colleague at North Carolina State where I was in school, and we shared a lot together. And he was very exuberant, very aggressive. He didn't mind asking at all. And I said to him, Dave, how did you become so good at this? I mean, you seem to be fearless when it comes to this. He said, well, Nelson, I learned to overcome my fear of rejection. And he said, once I overcame my fear of rejection, then I started asking for whatever I wanted. Because if they said no, I was even, and I didn't have it before I asked, I made the ask, they said no, and I didn't have it after I asked.

So I didn't lose anything. But if they said yes, I didn't have it before I asked, I made the ask and now I have it, and it all is determined on the ask. I said, man, that's really powerful. He said, yeah, I learned that when I was in high school asking girls out on a date. And he said, I'd call a young lady up on the phone and I'd say, will you go out with me? And she would say no. And then I would say, well, is your sister home? And I thought, Dave, you're a genius. That's really insightful there. So you got to learn to ask. And then later as I went in ministry, I learned that very quickly I had a gift of evangelism. I didn't know that, it took another wise pastor to point that out to me, but I began to develop the ability to ask for a decision.

Billy Graham's magazine was called Decision Magazine, the great evangelist. The Hour of Decision was the name of the Billy Graham radio show and TV show. You can still find replays today of those old broadcasts out on YouTube or Sirius XM or Christian television. And I began to watch how these other evangelists, these other pastors, how they were so good at making the ask. And then I began to realize, I've got to master asking. So I started studying it. I started reading books on it. I started reading even sales literature about it, 'cause I learned that a lot of sales literature was important. Zig Ziglar at the time was sort of a casual friend of mine, and I spent some time with him and I heard him talk about asking, and I heard him talk about what he called closing the sale. And I got really good at it and I began to teach it.

In fact, in my church planting classes that I used to do, the ones that I did at Saddleback or the regional ones that I did, or the launch conferences that were tied to my first book that I wrote, I actually had a section in there and I said, if you're going to be a church planter, you have to be a master asker. And you're always asking people to get involved with what you're doing. You're always asking people to step up and take a next step in what you're doing. So you've got to learn to ask. And so a number of years ago, not too long, but pre-Covid, which feels like it was a long time ago, one of my early church planting students who was in one of my church planting coaching networks, came to see me and wanted to pop in, give me an update on what was going on at their church and what was going with their church plant.

And he was doing good. And he gave me this gift and he said, my wife and I were traveling and we were at a flea market as they tended to do or like a thrift store type place. And he said, we saw this Aladdin's lamp. And they said, I've got to get this for Nelson. And I thought, I mean, does he want me to rub the lamp? You want me to do it? I mean, what is this thing? And he said, I think one of the greatest things that you ever taught me is you taught me how to ask, how to put out in front of people what it is you desire for them to do.

Or in the words of the magic lamp, what is it you wish for them to do? So make your wish. What is it you wish? Do you wish to see more people come to Christ? Do you wish to see more people baptized? Do you wish to see more people step up into ministry? Do you wish to see more volunteers step up to serve? Do you wish to see more people answer God's call to be a missionary and go on a mission field? What is it that you need to ask for? And he attributed a lot of his success to me teaching him to be a good asker. So that leads me to one of my favorite jokes.

I've, over time, for whatever reason, have this inability to forget jokes. Now, sometimes I forget the setup to the joke and remember the punch line. So some of my friends, they know that I constantly say, hey, the punch line is this. Remind me what the joke is? But I have a whole collection of parrot jokes. I love parrot jokes. So if you have a good parrot joke, I'd love to hear it. But also like these magic lamp jokes, I have a number of these and my favorite one is about this 60-year-old married couple. So I put the set-up here in the notes so I wouldn't forget it. It's about a 60-year-old married couple that are celebrating their wedding anniversary, and they're walking down the beach and there they find the magic lamp. And so they rub the lamp, the genie comes out and the genie says, well, it's your anniversary.

You found me, the magic lamp. I'll give each of you one wish. So the lady goes first and she says, we've never really had much money as a couple. We've never been able to travel much. My desire would be to see the world, to travel around the world to really experience it in a luxury fashion. Well, all of a sudden, the genie answers that wish. And airline tickets pop up, travel money pops up, and she's whisked off to this luxury cruise liner that's going to take her around to see the world. Well, now the guy's sitting there and the genie says, well, okay, sir, what would you like? And the guy says, well, I've always wanted to be married to somebody 30 years younger than me. And poof, he was 90.

All right, did you get it? I don't know. I can't tell. I can't tell. Okay, all right, see, he was 60. Okay, never mind. All right, we're going to move on. So asking, this is a growing edge for all leaders, and it's probably a growing edge for you, and it is a key critical skill to leading a growing church. And so growing churches are led by growing leaders and the ability to ask people for what you want, to ask them to do what they should do, to ask them to be obedient to scripture, to ask. Hopefully I got the K. If anytime throughout I'm dropping out the K, please let me know in the chat and say you're dropping the K. But we are not always good at this because we deal with this fear. Henry Blackaby just passed away a couple of weeks ago, and if you're listening to this recording, that was back in February, 2024, Henry Blackaby passed away, and I had the opportunity to spend some time with him just after experiencing God had really reached its peak.

I helped build some strategies and some stuff for some of his latter resources. And I remember being at him at a big denominational conference center, and somebody stood up and said, Dr. Blackaby, I hear what you're saying that we should do, but I'm afraid that, and they never got their sentence out because Blackaby interrupted, and he said, because he was kind of a prophetic voice, if you ever heard him. He said, dear sir, let me remind you that fear is faith in the enemy. And so if God calls you to do something and you're afraid to do it, that's a sign of misplaced faith. Because if you have faith in what God is telling you to do, faith in God's word, faith in God's will, faith in God's leadership, faith in God's power, faith in God's strength, then you're willing to ask and stretch outside of your comfort zone.

But if you have misplaced faith and you have faith in the enemy and you pull back, then you will never learn this skill. So asking is really an issue of faith. So why do we lack faith when it comes to asking? Well, sometimes it's because we've never been prepared, we've never studied it, we've never thought about it deeply. Maybe you didn't have those experiences like I had with the business person I was talking about or

buying the pants or any of those things we talked about. And that's because sometimes you've had poor training. And what I've noticed is around the world, people ask in different ways.

There are certain parts of the United States where this is true. And there are certain countries where the ask is often presented in the negative. And instead of saying, do you want to do this? They say, you don't want to do this, do you? And the propositions, nobody's ever really taught you the proper phrasing or given you the proper insight for how to do it. Or sometimes we don't believe in what we're asking. So if we have it settled that this is good, that this is right, that God is on our side and we don't have a deep enough belief, then we can be afraid to ask. We also can be afraid to ask, and this is what I hear a lot, is that we feel like we're imposing on the other person.

I don't want to ask them to serve or volunteer because I know they're already busy. And so what we end up doing is we end up saying no for the other person before we even make the ask. And I find this to be really common. In fact, I say it all the time to our team, don't say no for them, make the ask, let them, but we feel like we're sort of imposing on them. So we say no before we even ask. And then sometimes all of this is really about the fear of rejection or what I might call the fear of people. And so again, going back to properly placed faith is faith in God. Well, when you have your faith in God and you're more afraid of being disobedient to God than you are the fear of people and you have proper faith, then you will overcome your fear of rejection because there's no reason to be afraid of other people. Again, like my buddy said, you didn't have it before you asked.

You applied to a college, you're not in that college now, that college rejects you, you're still not in that college, but at least you applied. You made the ask. And the same thing with people. So we have to learn to overcome our fear of people. As far as I know, nobody's ever really been hurt in ministry by asking, but a lot of people have been hurt because we as ministers, do not ask. So hopefully I've got you thinking about this topic that we're going to talk about, and you're kind of primed and ready now to talk about the five invitations. So there they are. I hope you got all that and you can win the invitation, the notes process. But I just want you to know I'm going to end today with talking about what makes a good ask, and then there's going to be a final giveaway.

#1 The Gospel Invitation

So that's where we're going and we got a lot ahead of us. And so let's get into the first invitation that every pastor must master, and that is the gospel invitation. This is of course extending the invitation for people to follow and put their trust in Jesus Christ. This is commonly what we think of when we talk about the invitation. In fact, in a lot of churches, in all churches, we do it in some way, and that is we have an invitation time. And that invitation time in some churches is a commitment that people might make in prayer, and that's it. And that's the invitation. For others, it's a prayer plus maybe taking a next step on a connection card. That's the one we most commonly use at the journey. I came up in a tradition, after I was saved and after I went into ministry, I was very much embraced by the independent Bible fellowship movement, the independent Baptist kind of movement.

And we did what was a come forward invitation. And so you would extend the invitation, people would stand to their feet, they would sing, and you would invite them to come forward, and that invitation. So however you might do this early on in the invitation, if you're a student of this, you know that there's been things over time, like the anxious bench that was used during some of the great awakenings in America, where someone who was thinking about their salvation, feeling under conviction, they could come. We do

things where we invite people to meet us in a counseling room, or when I was on staff with Rick Warren, we had a table that people could go to. We didn't do the come forward invitation, but in Southern California where the weather was nice, we had a booth set up outside that we called the Fresh Start Table, and people could go to that table and let people know their decision, and that would be the invitation.

Now, we also used a card and some other methods as well. Maybe on your website, sometimes they can fill out a form or they can mark their invitation, but we think about this gospel invitation. And when we think about it, we often think about doing the invitation at the end of the service. But I want to reframe just a moment, some thoughts about the gospel invitation. And I have a small teaching that I do in coaching that I go into more detail than what I have time to do now, but it's what I call the decision dilemma. And the decision dilemma is how often do I extend the invitation? And then when I extend an invitation for salvation, how long should that invitation be?

Do you ever find yourself dealing with that dilemma? You know you want to call people to faith in Christ, and I'm talking to all of you, whether you feel like you have the gift of evangelism or not. This is something that every pastor must master, that we call people to follow Jesus. Oh, just while you're thinking about that, of this dilemma of how long do you give the invitation, when do you give it? How do I say it? One of my first encounters with church planting was working with a church plant that would bring me in as a guest speaker and about every three or four months, and this pastor, who I'm still friends with to this day and eventually served with as his second teacher for a couple of years when I was doing my graduate work at Duke University, but before I really partnered up with him and really learned from him and was able to be his assistant, before that, he knew me as an evangelist and he would bring me into his church.

He would schedule me to preach at his church about every four months. And they had two services at the time as a growing church. And I would come in and every time I preached during that cycle, we would have just an exceptional number of people saved. And at first I thought, boy, I've really matured as an evangelist because I've been doing full-time evangelism for six or seven years at this point. I preached on average 40 weeks a year, extending invitations every night, seeing people saved and all that. But I mean, here I would come into this church and I was just there four months ago, and I mean, they had grown and they were adding services. And now I would preach and I would extend an invitation and we would just have an unusually large number of people saved. And what I realized after about the second time of doing this is this guy was a great pastor, but he was really bad at the invitation.

So for four months, he would plant seed and plant seed and plant seed and plant seed, and God would water it. And the small group pastors would be to the people that were there, the people that attended the church. They would cultivate the seed that was planted, and then they would bring me in as an evangelist. And for the first time in several months, a whole group of people heard a gospel invitation for the first time and responded. And it wasn't that I was such a great evangelist, even though God did seem to bless me beyond anything that I could take credit for, but in this case, it was just simply that this pastor was not good at asking at what we call it in those days, drawing the net.

And so how do we do that? Well, the way I've started breaking this down when it comes to the decision dilemma is that I think of it this way. I think that every week we offer some kind of gospel invitation. So every week we offer some type of gospel invitation. This could be between two minutes or more, but it's a small gospel invitation and you offer it every week. No matter what you're preaching on, you offer the invitation every week. So every week you give people a chance to say yes to the Gospel. And that's really important. There's a very famous story about D.L. Moody preaching, and he presented the Gospel, but he did

not extend an invitation. And he said, "You think about it, and then tomorrow night I'm going to give you a chance to respond." Well, between that first presentation and then before he could get to the second night to give the invitation, the Great Chicago Fire broke out, or at least a massive fire. Again, I don't remember if it was the greatest of the fires, but there were multiple ones over time. But there was a massive fire in Chicago and they were unable to meet that second night. And Moody thought to himself, "Never again will I preach without presenting an invitation right there at that time."

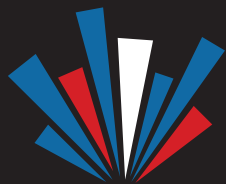
And of course, Charles Spurgeon did this as well, and he did something too that I'm going to talk about a little bit later, in that Spurgeon said, "Sometimes it's best not to wait till the end of your sermon to present the Gospel invitation." And I'll say a word about that when we get to the win here in just a moment. But every week we offer some kind of Gospel invitation. And then, I'm going to just kind of put a number on it because I want to be specific, but I want to give you the freedom to adjust it. And I'm going to say four times a year or more, we offer an extended Gospel invitation. And this is what I would say is a five-minute to 10-minute presentation of the Gospel. And so at least four times a year, you're offering some kind of extended Gospel invitation.

Now, you may say, "That's too little." Your goal might be 12... Messing up my formatting here. So your goal might be 12 times a year to offer some kind of extended Gospel invitation. It doesn't really matter how many times you do it, but it's not necessarily every week. But this is where sometime in your message you do a little bit more than, "Let's just bow our heads and pray," and you call people to faith in Christ. This is where you might go into a bit of an explanation. Maybe you use the classic ABCD kind of presentation. Admit, believe, confess, decide right now to do it, or whatever your ABCD version is. It might be where you do a quick walk through the Romans Road. By the way, on the Romans Road, I talk about this in my book, *The Difference Maker*, and I want to say a word about *The Difference Maker*.... Sandra, remind me when we go to the giveaway here in about five or six minutes to say a word about that if I forget.

But a lot of people think these evangelism tools that have been around for a long time that they're irrelevant anymore. But we have a friendship at our church and I have a personal friendship with Bernhard Langer. If you know him, the golfer. He will miss the Masters this year for the first time ever. It's the last year. He's won the Masters a number of times. He's famous for that shot where his golf ball was in the tree, remember that? And he made that shot. And I don't golf and I don't know much about golfing, but he actually, I ran into him the other day. He's hurt his Achilles and he's not going to be able to play in the Masters, and this is the last year he's eligible. So he's really heartbroken.

But he is a committed believer and has a great testimony. And we've had him at our church a couple of times. And I was standing backstage one time when he was giving his testimony and at the end he said, "Now that I've given you the testimony, I want to invite you to follow Jesus." And he said, "To do that, I want to share just a few verses with you." And he opened his Bible and he went through what you and I would call the Romans Road. Maybe he started, I forget, he started with 6:23 or exactly where he started, but 6:23, 5:17, down through the Romans Road, but that I won't go into it now. And of course we had a good number of people make decisions. He's a pretty gifted evangelist, and it was a good day for our church.

But afterwards, a number of people in our church said to me, "Did you write down those verses that Bernhard gave at the end?" Because normally when I preach, I use printed notes and I give them the verses or we put the verses up on the screen, but we didn't really know how Bernhard was going to land it on this particular day. And I don't even know if he knew at that particular point. But I said, "Oh yeah, there's a name for that. It's called the Romans Road." And they're like, "What are you talking about?" I said, "Yeah, it's



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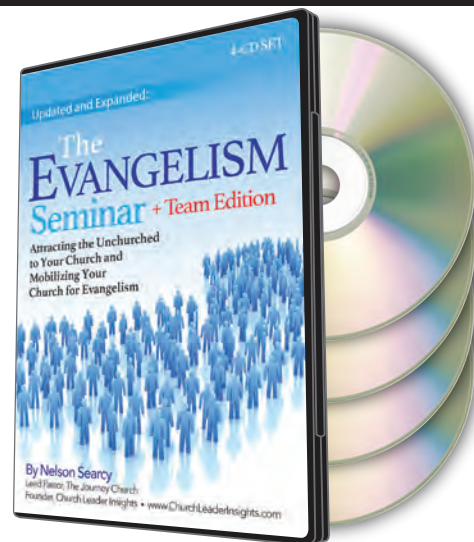
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a presentation of the Gospel.” And so we printed up these little bookmarks of the Romans Road and we have them out at our services. And it’s a nicely designed piece, and you can get those from us if you buy The Difference Maker books from me because we now give them with our Difference Maker books.

But it was just really interesting to me that in a contemporary church, people had forgotten this very basic simple thing of the Romans Road. So what I’m talking about here is you preach your sermon, but now you’re taking five to 10 minutes to explain the Gospel in a little more detail. So whatever it is that you might like to do. And then I would say that at least twice a year, you devote a full service, or sermon maybe would be the better word, devote a full sermon to a Gospel presentation. Twice a year you devote a full sermon to a Gospel presentation.

Now, I think all of you would agree that that’s a good thing. What you’re going to find is maybe it’s a little difficult for you to do because we might be talking about 30 minutes here, 25 to 30 minutes, or at our church we run about a 35-minute sermon. We shoot for 33, 32, we are okay with 35. But how do you really unpack the Gospel in great detail over the course of a full sermon? And particularly here, I’m talking about the evangelistic side of the Gospel. I know that we could argue theology about what is the theology of the Gospel, what’s the full Gospel and all that. But here what I’m really talking about is a full explanation of what it means to be a believer. And again, you could take the Romans Road and turn it into a full sermon. That would be a very appropriate thing to do.

We’ve done what we call One-Verse Evangelism that was made famous by Randy Raysbrook at InterVarsity Press. He’s now retired. But it’s called One-Verse Evangelism where we take Romans 6:23 and we take that one verse and we unpack it using a big screen, and we do basically what’s called the bridge diagram, which is the Billy Graham peace with God diagram. We’ve also done full presentations of the Gospel using the Jesus film or some of the famous movies or TV shows where we show segments of the Gospel and then we show a five-minute clip, talk about it, five-minute clip, talk about it. And so you’re looking for different ways to present it, the ABCD, or the four Cs of the Gospel. The guy who does the Ark experience, he’s got a Gospel presentation called the 7 C’s of the Gospel. And I’m always looking for different ways on how to do a full sermon.

Now, I will say that, honestly, I don’t know that I do twice a year, but I at least make sure I do it once a year, but on a good year, I get it in twice. And so maybe one that I think is just an absolute as clear presentation of the Gospel as I can do. And then another one that is a very full presentation of the Gospel, but maybe tied into maybe a slightly different topic like forgiveness or grace or something like that. But it’s pretty close to it. I did a grace message one time that was a full presentation of the Gospel doing G-R-A-C-E, and there’s different versions of how to do that acrostic.

So you can be creative on this, but this is kind of the decision dilemma, but I really think there’s a lot of fruit here with giving the Gospel every week. So you’ve got to be bold about this. You’ve got to take ownership of this. It doesn’t matter if you have the gift of evangelism or not. Stir up the gift within you if you need to. But this is part of the Great Commission. It’s part of our obedience, it’s part of the preaching and all that. So we have to be bold.

And on the theme of boldness, I’m reminded of something the late Zig Ziglar. I told you I had a friendship and traveled some with him back in the days. After I was selected as that young entrepreneur I was part of a traveling, speaking circuit by the National Chambers of Commerce. And Ziglar used to teach that there are five main reasons why people don’t say yes to what we’re presenting. And they don’t translate directly to our

Gospel presentation, but they do pretty well.

So one is he said people say no to what we're offering when they don't realize their need for it. So when we present the Gospel presentation, we got to show people their need. This is missing in a lot of Gospel presentations. This is me expressing my theological opinions here. But we don't talk enough about sin. And when we do, our definition is vague and all of that. But people have to realize their need for a savior. And part of our presentation of the Gospel is to explain why people need to respond to this invitation. But then they have no desire.

Now, obviously we want to be persuasive humanly speaking, but at the same time, we have to also rely on the Holy Spirit. So from a human standpoint, we can be as persuasive as we can be to try to stir up this desire in people, to tell them why they need it, to explain what Jesus did on the cross, to use persuasive language. But we know that we are reliant on the Holy Spirit. And there's an old definition of evangelism that goes something like this. Evangelism is sharing the Gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results up to God.

Now, I have a small beef with this leaving the results up to God. So I understand the idea of leaving the results up to God is meaning we don't convert anybody. We can persuade, we can compel, we can do the best that we can, and God does the converting. There's absolutely no doubt about that, the Holy Spirit. And whenever you are sharing the Gospel, you'll never be closer to God the Holy Spirit than when you're in that moment. Say another word about that in just a minute from something I learned from Billy Graham. But I do also think that we leave the results up to God, but there does need to be an effort of follow up. And so I think that's missing.

And this is where I think Donald McGavran's contribution to say that evangelism begins with the presentation of the Gospel, and it effectively ends with people being enfolded into a congregation. So remember yesterday we were talking about what a pastor does when it comes to lead, feed, protect, but also fold. They enfold people into that. So this is why evangelism and assimilation go hand in hand. So I do want to say, yeah, we leave the results up to God, but I do think there is a human responsibility to capture those results, to collect those results, and then do what we can on the back side to nurture that new believer. It's called being born again. And so when a new baby is born, I don't know why I'm deleting that, when a new baby is born into the kingdom, we want to take care of that new baby.

By the way, one of my other mentors said one time, he said, "Nelson, when God gets ready to birth a new baby into the kingdom, he looks for the warmest incubator." And so I've often prayed for our church to be the kind of incubator, the warmest incubator in town, so that when God gets ready to send unchurched people, send lost people, as another friend of mine says, they wash up on the shores of our church, and I'll take them all day long.

Now, back to Ziglar, sometimes people say no because of the money issue. Now that's not really something for us because obviously salvation is free, it's free and paid for, but people have to understand the cost of salvation. So we have to explain that as well, because salvation is free, salvation is free, but it's not cheap. So it doesn't directly apply, but we can make application of that.

Now, this is a big one is people think there is no hurry, as part of that. So there does need to be an urgency to our appeal. And I will say that during my time of being a vocational evangelist, this was something that

I did struggle with. I became used to presenting the Gospel. I became used to seeing people saved at the different revival or outdoor tent meetings or things like that I was doing. And I didn't always present the urgency. And some of that was because some of my peers in vocational evangelism, maybe they were a little melodramatic when it came to the no hurry.

One of the famous evangelists of that season, he was older at this time, but he was famous for the, "You might walk out of here tonight and be hit by a bus." And I was thinking, "We're like out in the middle of nowhere on some rural Route 4. I don't think there's any buses coming through here." But I get the point. But they were just a little bit like, "You could die tonight." And there is something to that. And I do think things like Evangelism Explosion, that's another one that I have great respect for, and they're helping us learn how to understand the Gospel. I do think there's something to the appeal. If you were to die tonight and stand before God and he ask you, "Why should I let you into my heaven?" What are you going to say? Because there is an urgency to our appeal. But also there's an urgency not only for the next life, but there's an urgency in this life.

And that's why I love this word zoe, the biblical word for eternity, because it implies that this eternal life, this good life that we live, this blessed life that we can experience, you can experience that through a glass darkly now. And so there's an urgency, even if you go on to live another 30 years, even if you continue, but you can experience God's blessing and that relationship with God and enjoy that in this life in an imperfect way, and then it will be perfected when you get to heaven. So there's an urgency, even if they don't think death is just around the corner.

And then no trust. And this is really an issue of authenticity on behalf of the pastor. And that's really the world that we're living in, that people have to trust the communicator before they hear what is being communicated. And this also is where your heart, your passion, your integrity is so important to the Gospel presentation because first they have to believe in you and what you're saying before they can believe in what you're asking them to believe in. And I think this is really a big issue. And right now we're living in a society where people don't trust the church, even where trust in pastors is at an all time low. But you want to build that trust, you want to build that.

And it reminds me of the famous story of Ben Franklin, who had a friendship with George Whitefield, and I'll let you study for yourself if you think Ben Franklin ever made a decision or not. It seems to me that unfortunately he never did. But it's unfortunate because I'd like to meet him in heaven. But Franklin said one time, "I don't mind that Whitefield condemns my soul to hell because when he does it, he does it with a tear in his eye." And so this is also kind of an issue of integrity and then an issue of compassion and this transfer of emotion that happens when you extend the invitation.

So I don't like to leave the invitation to chance. I'm very much a believer that when it comes to the Gospel invitation, and especially since you're primarily extending the Gospel invitation through sermons, I want you to write it out, to write out exactly what you're going to say. And you don't have to agree with what I'm about to say now, but this has been my approach. I am actually a believer in leading people in a prayer of commitment. Sometimes we call it the sinner's prayer, the prayer of salvation. And I want to write that out. And if there's any part of my sermon that I'm going to memorize, that I want to know for certain, or even if I want to read it from my notes, it is this prayer of commitment. And more times than not, this is exactly how I do it.

And it might be, Heavenly Father, it might be, dear God, it might be, oh God, it might be, oh Lord. But I say,

"Oh Lord, I'm a sinner," and I invite people to pray this with me. "I'm sorry for my sin. I'm willing to turn from my sin. I receive Jesus Christ as my savior." Sometimes I might change that to leader or Lord, depending on what I've been talking about, but I confess Jesus as Lord. And then I love this, "From this moment on, I want to follow him and the fellowship of his church." So I've actually added a little bit of that ecclesiology, that enfolding, right here into my quote, unquote, "sinner's prayer." And then we pray in Christ's name or in Jesus' name. I actually prefer not to use the word Christ these days, but to use the word Jesus. Christ has become too much of a curse word in our day. So I like to sometimes change it to Jesus.

But it can be some version of that, and I might adapt it a little bit. If I've been talking about the Messiah, I might use the word savior. If I've been talking about following Jesus, I might use the word leader, different things that I have. But there's always a confession. There's always a repentance. There's always a receiving or believing or a confessing. And then there's always a commitment to this day forward. So that's kind of the what of the invitation. That's what the Gospel invitation is.

Now, this invitation that we're talking about, it can be presented in very different ways. So I'm talking about extending it from the pulpit or during your preaching, but you should also be ready to do this in small groups. You want to teach your small group leaders from time to time to do that. And if you go through Kerrick Small Group Coaching, we encourage you sometimes in the Fall to take two weeks and we have a small group training on evangelism and sharing your testimony that can work with that. And then of course, one-on-one with that, or one per household, talking to a household, as it might be. And so this is the invitation to follow Jesus.

Now, just a few thoughts on that. This is part of the, that's supposed to be system, this is part of the evangelism system. It's not all of the evangelism system. But I do have a full three-hour seminar on that. I think there is some special going on with that, but you can check that in your HQ. Now, as I mentioned, when it comes to this Gospel invitation, I like to write it out. I don't want to leave it to chance. If there's any time in your sermon that your mind is going to go blank, no matter how many times you've done it, it's going to be right here during that critical time because at that moment when you're extending this Gospel invitation, you are standing literally for some people between heaven and hell. And that is a very powerful thing. So you want to write it out.

Let me also encourage you to do this. Study other pastors and their Gospel presentation. There are a number of great books, and you really have to go back a generation to find them. But if you go online and look for them, you will find some very classic books on how to extend a Gospel invitation. In fact, before I decided to do all five invitations at one time, I had thought about doing a seminar or something like 12 ways to extend a Gospel invitation, and really break it down into far more details based on study of history as well as contemporary presentations of the Gospel. But maybe there'll be an offshoot of this training some other time where we just look at this one area for two to three hours at a time. But then listen to some of the best Gospel preachers today. And I'm not going to name names right now because as soon as I name names, they'll do something stupid in the news next week.

But you can go back and read classic stuff or study classic people, whether it's George Whitefield or one of my favorite, Charles Spurgeon, I mentioned Billy Graham, but there's a number of other great ones in there as well that you can study. I came up cutting my teeth in ministry on some of these great fundamentalist preachers like Jack Hyles or J. Frank Norris, or some of those. I mean, when I read those invitations, boy, they're really compelling. I mean, John Wesley. Others you can study. People have written about that. And then people have written about some classic books on invitation. If you have one that you want to share, I'd

love to hear it. And then maybe tomorrow if I get a chance, I'll share some books outside of this presentation. But study other pastors, see how they do it.

Then, like I said, mix it up. We commonly think of giving the invitation at the end of the sermon, but as I mentioned, Charles Spurgeon said and made a great argument for not waiting to the end of the sermon. And I guess at the Tabernacle, he dealt with the same problems that we do. When people learn that your service is going to end at an hour or an hour and a half, they begin to know when you're getting to the end. If you use fill in the blank notes and you give that last fill in, they start putting their stuff away, or they can see the ticking clock or whatever it might be. And sometimes at the end of the sermon, they get restless and they start thinking about picking up their children or where they're going to go for lunch or whatever. So I guess Spurgeon had a problem with that too at the Tabernacle, because he said, "Sometimes it gets rambunctious at the end of my sermon, so sometimes I give the Gospel presentation up front."

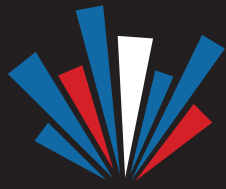
One of our pastors did that. In fact, it's our host for today. I'll brag on him. I wasn't necessarily convinced because I'm an old evangelist, give the Gospel at the end. But he said, "No, no. What I want to do is I want to come out of the gate with the strong story and this Gospel, and then 10 or 15 minutes in, I'm going to ask them to bow their heads and I'm going to give the invitation." And he did it. He gave a great Gospel presentation, had a great biblical story tied to it. 10, 15 minutes in, he led them in the sinner's prayer. He said, "Grab your connection card," which is how we register decisions. They marked the decision on there. And then he went on to point two and point three and point four and finished up the 35-minute message, putting it right at the top of the message. Or you can embed it in the middle. But you might want to mix it up.

And then I mentioned mixing it up with the short, medium, and long presentations of the Gospel. And then remember, as you do this, there is going to be spiritual warfare because, like I mentioned up here, one of the reasons you write it out is because the devil's going to do everything he can. I'm sure you've noticed that it's during the invitation, if you will, whether it's an invitation from stage, or a come forward invitation, or a mark it on your connection card, or leading the sinner's prayer or however you're doing it, this is when people's phones will go off. It's when the babies that have been silent all service will start to cry. It's when the devil really begins to work because right there you were standing between heaven and hell, and you have this spiritual warfare. So expect it.

So do everything you can to be prayed up, to be prepared, to present it in the way that God has led you to do, because the devil's going to do everything he can to work against you. And of course, we know that works when we're in the pulpit. We know that's true in a small group setting, or in a one-on-one, or talking to a family about the Gospel. It's there.

So then we've already talked about when to do it. Of course, every sermon. We talked about when to do it. Every open door that you have. I like to call these divine appointments that you have. This is often one-on-one, or on a family, or at special evangelism events that you might do at your church, or outreach events that you do, or anytime. There's no bad time to really do this.

And then understand the benefits to the person saying yes. You're going to see this. By the way, look what's coming up. There it is. So now it would be a good time to turn on your camera. The benefits of saying yes. I don't think I have to say that. The benefits of saying yes are hell, no, heaven, yes. I mean, do we really need any stronger benefit to that?



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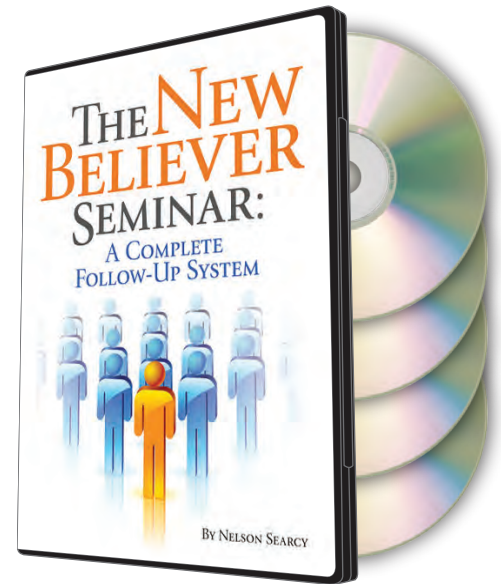
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And then you want to be ready for the follow-up. And you can do the follow-up in a number of different ways. There's the come forward, and then you want to capture their information. There's the connection card or commitment card approach with that. There's the special location. That might be a room or a booth or an area where you meet. And then once you collect and capture the info, then you want to have a new believer follow-up in place. And we go into this in SB Coaching. I have a full new believer follow-up system, and it's bigger than what we have time to talk about today, but you want to think about your new believer follow-up. And when I do that, I often think about the first hour, the first day, first week, and some other things, just to give you a heads-up on that. But I will say too, that as you develop your invitation, be sure you're ready for the follow-up.

So what do you want them to do so that you can capture their information? This is a place where sometimes you do a great gospel invitation, but you haven't thought through how they acknowledge that invitation. I find this too sometimes on a church's website. Just a couple, one other thought on that might go up here under, "When," and that is on the staff page of your website. A great thing on your website, is for every staff member to record their testimony, and put it with that staff listing on the website. Did you know the second most visited page on your website is the staff listing? Particularly the pastor's page, because people want to know who is this pastor who's in charge? So they're on your page. Go get your iPhone and record your testimony. And do a three minute, four minute version of that, and put that on your staff page.

Then give a chance right there for people to email you or to record a decision. And then if you've got multiple staff, have them all do it. Men, women, young, older, whatever that might be. Now we have a couple of things that will really help you with this, and I want to give you this website and I don't have time to talk through it now, but maybe tomorrow during the break we can do it. Or if I finish early, which is never likely, but you never know, we have a site that is hidden. You won't find it by just clicking around on the site right now. It's hidden. Many of you have already gone there, because when you registered for this training, this was on your thank-you page, but this is how to lead a two-hour difference-maker training. I know for a fact that one of you on the session right now did this last night with 45 people in your church.

I appreciate the update that you sent me. This is a two-hour difference-maker, it's supposed to be, "Difference-maker," training. What we do here is we took my book *The Difference-Maker* and we turned it into a free seminar that you can download the audio, the notes, everything is there. Again, I don't have time to go into all that. Just make a note of that website, and be sure and check that out.

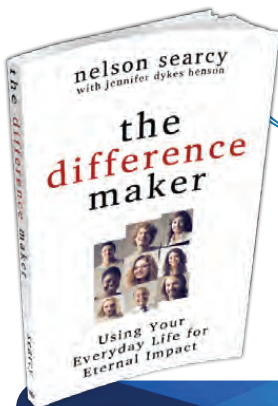
So we have looked at the first invitation that every pastor must master, and now we're going to move on to some that move a little faster.

#2 The Membership Invitation

The second invitation is the membership invitation. The membership invitation. This is generally a little easier for pastors to extend, and to invite people to become members of their church. But it's also one that I think a lot of pastors leave a lot of fruit on the table, because they haven't spent as much time as they should thinking about the elements, the benefits of the invitation.

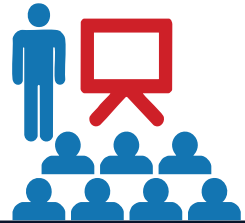
So before I get into this, I want to say just a word about the difference between benefits, that font looks small. Let me see if I can grab a bigger font here. The benefits versus features. So one of the techniques in extending a good invitation is to understand the benefits of saying yes to that invitation, and then

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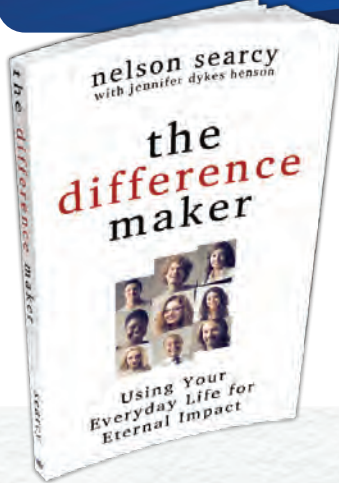
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distinguishing that from the features of that invitation. I didn't want to do that back up in the gospel invitation, because presenting the gospel is a different deal. You're never going to have more of the Holy Spirit's power, you're never going to have more of God's presence than when you're extending that gospel invitation. I do think you were significantly empowered, and God wants his church to be filled with committed members, and things of that nature. But now we're getting into some things where how we say things and how we present them are a little different.

So the famous story on this is if you're trying to sell a hammer. So if I'm trying to sell a hammer, a lot of times what I say is, "This is a hammer that will last you a long time. This is a hammer that's made of this particular kind of metal or this particular kind of wood, or it has this particular kind of guarantee," where everything I said right there, that is a feature of the hammer, the type of wood, the color, the type of metal that the end is made of. That's all a feature. The benefit is it is going to allow you to get your work done faster. It's going to eliminate cost, because it's going to last a long time. It's going to feel good inside of your hands. So you're going to have less pain if you use it all day. So these are the benefits.

Then another favorite one of mine is, and I don't know why I'm on carpentry stuff, but hey, Jesus was a carpenter. So the other one is a drill. So we can talk about all kinds of features. It's this size, it drills this deep. If it is a power drill, or it's a cordless drill, or it's a manual drill, but we forget the benefit is the hole. You actually make a hole where you need one. So we have to understand the difference benefits. When it comes to a car, we think of the features, okay, it's black, it sells for this much, it has air conditioning. We forget about the benefits. The benefits are it will save money, because it has great gas mileage. It will look good. You enjoy driving it, it's comfortable, it's got great AC. The heat comes on really quick. So we got to know the difference between benefits and features. So when it comes to membership and this invitation, one of the things you might want to ask, is, "What are the benefits of being a member?" And then, "What are the features of the membership class or process?"

So this is worth thinking. And I will say here, those who are in more of a reformed tradition, they've done a better job over time, or maybe even the baptists have done a little better job over time of explaining the benefits of being a member. Then this gets into the technical aspects of how do you actually become one? So part of these benefits of being a member, it requires a little presentation of ecclesiology. I think I say, "Ecclesiology," somebody help me. All right, I don't know, ecclesiology. I think I'm missing an L. Who cares? Okay, ecclesiology a little bit of a scripture study on membership. And then well, I got so tied up on dealing with the ecclesiology, I feel bad, I misspelled that. But it requires a little bit of thinking, okay, what are the scriptural benefits of being a member? What is the ecclesiology reasons for being a member? What are the discipleship reasons for being a member? And then just what are the practical benefits of being a member?

Then the features of the membership class is the when, where, how to sign up, kind of process. How long is the membership class? What will you learn? And things of that nature. So it is important to study that. If you decide after this presentation, if you decide to do a little study on salesmanship being a good salesperson, which I do recommend, and I would say start with Zig Ziglar's book. I'll come back to that later. Then understanding the difference between features and benefits. So there are Biblical mandates for being a member, I believe. I believe that it's very scriptural to be a member. Paul uses the word, "Member," and actually Paul took that word that we translate as, "Member," he took that from the medical world. Your hand is a member of your body, your arm is a member of your body.

I have a new liver that now that used to belong to somebody else. It's 10 years younger than me. So my liver is 10 years younger than the rest of me. That was once a member, and now it's a member of my body. So

Paul took that imagery and he brought it over into the church, and he says, "We should be members of the church." And depending on your different beliefs on membership, and I realize there's some diversity among denominations here about what it means to be a member, but there's the member of the universal Body of Christ when you become a believer. But then you get to choose your individual church family that you become a member of.

You don't get to choose your biological family, but you do get to choose your spiritual family. So you want to think about that, and just keep that in mind as we unpack this. But there's the membership invitation. So what is that invitation? Well, it's the invitation to become an official member at our church. And that phrase, "Official member," that's really up to you to decide. For us, we do have at our place an official process for becoming a member at our church. So we often sometimes say that the What is to stop dating the church. So you can be a regular attender for a long time, just by dating the church. Start stop dating the church, and fully commit to being a member at the church. And that is a covenant member.

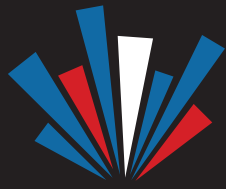
That's what it is at our place. This ties in with the assimilation system. The assimilation system is moving someone from first time guest, you don't want people to join the first time they attend, first time guest and then we're moving them to become fully developing, or fully engaged members at our church. That's what the assimilation process is all about. There's four steps in that process, and then there's steps inside each of those four steps. So a lot of times we suffer from lack of members because there's lack in how often we invite people to be a member. Or how many membership classes that we do. So for the sake of simplicity, I'm going to assume that you have some kind of membership process at your church. Now let me tell you this story, just in case you're new and you've never heard me tell it.

So in serving as an evangelist, once I got married, I'd been out there traveling and preaching these revivals and tent meetings and things I was telling you about. But then around that time, I also got married, and I needed to make some additional income, and I also needed to settle down a little bit, so I couldn't continue to serve. So there was this church that I'd preached at, a little small, traditional, they were technically a Southern Baptist Church, but they were really an independent Baptist church in their setup. And they needed a pastor, and they were willing to let me pastor the church as best I could and still travel. So I could preach there in the morning and then still do my evangelism, and preaching meetings and things like that around.

Well, they called me to be their pastor. And there were 13 people there the night that I did my trial sermon. I did win the vote, but I found out later that if I had not accepted their call to be their pastor, the next vote was going to be to merge with the bigger sort of independent Baptist church down the street.

I'm still not sure to this day that they made the right decision, but they did call me as pastor, and then we did grow. I told them, I said, "I'll stay with you as long as I can, or until the church grows to 100 people," because I felt like if it grew to 100, they would need someone who was a better pastor than me, because I was out preaching all these revivals and things. They needed a more committed pastor, plus it would give them the financial base to call a pastor and all that. I stayed a little longer. The church grew to about 170 before I left.

But over those few years, we never had a good membership process. I could never convince this church to really embrace a membership process. The reason why is we did this come-forward invitation thing. So I would preach, and then I would go down and stand in front of the communion table in front of the altar, and I would invite people to come forward. Well, that was okay if they were making a decision to follow Jesus, we would take their name, then we would follow up with them afterwards, and then try to move them toward



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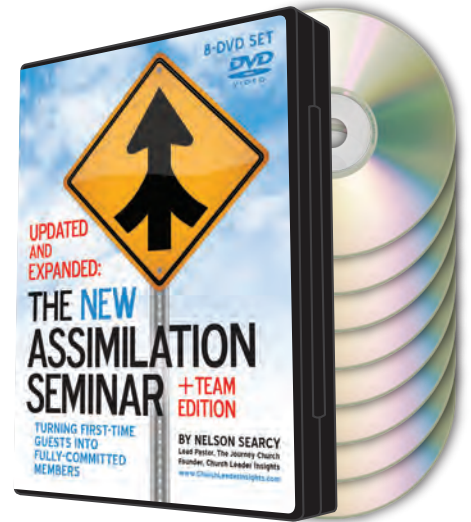
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baptism and different things a little bit later.

But we extended also the invitation for people to become a member of our church. They would come down, and just in a matter of seconds ... As the pastor, I was expected to talk to them about membership, to decide that they were worthy of membership. Then by the end of the hymn, to be ready to turn and present them to the church. Then I would say, "Okay, Jose and his wife Enid, they've come forward to join our church." Or, "Sam and Mary, they've come forward to join our church," or, "Little Joey has come forward to join our church."

And I'd say, "Now those of you that are members, how many of you vote to accept them into our church?" We were doing this right there at the end of the service, people would raise their hand and vote. It was always unanimous. We never voted against anybody. I thought to myself many times, "I don't know Jose, I don't know Mary, I don't know the little Joey's salvation status." Now I would try to follow up with them and try to meet with them afterwards. But you know the old joke about the dog that never would leave the Baptist church, and they finally made the dog a member, and he never showed up again. So that's how a lot of these folks were. But these could be the biggest sinners in the world, and I had no idea, I just had to take their word.

Now, I would try to ask them, "Are you saved?" Or, "Do you know for sure you're going to heaven?" Whatever it might be. But that was a very bad membership process. It was also one of the reasons that little church has always struggled and been unhealthy. I never had really much luck. I mean, probably I was a little too timid as a pastor, but also they needed somebody else to really guide them into doing that. Well, today we have a much different process. Today you sign up to come to a membership class, and then you fill out paperwork when you get to that class. We go, take you through the class. You then complete the paperwork at the end of the class, turn it in if you want to be a member. We then review it, have conversations to make sure you meet the scriptural requirements for being a member that we have defined, and that you meet the practical requirements of being a member that we require.

So in our case, it's two months of attendance at our church at least, you've been attending for two months. So you know who we are and you're making an informed decision. That you've been baptized through immersion. Now that again, doesn't translate maybe to everybody on who's listening. So I understand that. You get to pick. And then we do check out that you meet the minimal biblical requirements for being a member, that you're saved, that you're pursuing your relationship with Christ. That is through conversation. We try to look at any sins that might prevent you from being a member.

Then there's a signed covenant, and maybe you prefer the word, "Commitment," but there's a signed membership commitment that they make. The membership commitment is you can search online and find plenty of examples of these. There's nothing special about ours. We adopted it from other churches, and modeled it. But it says things like, "I will attend my church, I will give, I serve, I'll speak well of the church, I'll pray for my church." Very basic commitments to be a member. So we have a process where we do these membership classes from time to time. So you want to build a strong membership process of whatever that might be. So the way this process might be for us, is we preach, or announce, or compel people toward membership.

This is where we think about the features, and we think about the benefits, and all that. Then they express their interest in attending membership class. They then attend the membership class, then we review their

membership application, and then we approve their signed covenant. Then we regularly review the status of their membership. It's beyond the scope today, but we actually have created an annual membership renewal process. If you're interested in that, I'm thinking about doing a full resource on how to do an annual membership renewal. So if you are interested in that, just type, "Membership renewal," in the chat, because I'd just be curious to know if you are interested in that. It may not be worth my time doing it if nobody's interested, but this is our process.

So this membership renewal, the status of their membership, that happens generally on a yearly basis, but sometimes it happens also when we do our semester small groups. So sometimes we review their membership as much as three times a year, but we definitely do it annually. So if you're interested in that process, this is how we keep our membership rolls clean, and we make sure everybody falls through the cracks. Sorry about that. All right, sometimes I just amuse myself. Sorry. Okay, nothing else has a period. So we'll take that period off there. But this is our process. This does not have to be your process.

But this is where a lot of people mess up right here. You want to think through the benefits of being a member. By benefits I don't necessarily mean they get the special members-only jacket, or they get front row parking, or whatever. I'm talking about the obedience memberships, the idea that you're part of something bigger than yourselves. The idea that you're going to contribute, and that you're going to be generous, and that this is going to be a place where you grow. This is going to be a place where you're not just casual with, but you're going to be committed to with that. And to be a member, as you make a deeper commitment to our church, we make a deeper commitment to you, to be able to equip you and train you. So we don't see membership as the end of your time with us. It may be the end of the assimilation system, but it really is the end of the beginning when you join. Joining is the end of the beginning of your journey with our church.

So you've come in, you've been a first time guest, you've been a second time guest, you've been a regular attendee. Now you go through membership class. Well, it's just that punctuation there at the beginning, the end of stage one if you will, or the end of the first phase of your relationship with our church. But you want to think that through, and think through the features, think through the benefits of what it means to be a member. Then you think about when. When are you going to offer, how often will you hold your membership?

Yeah, if you do the come-forward invitation like we did, you might be doing it every week. Well, even if you use the connection card, you can collect interest in membership anytime on your weekly connection card, or on your website, or in your church communications, however you go about doing that. So from time to time, you can highlight membership, you can collect interest in that, and you can do that anytime that you want to. For us, membership is always on the connection card. Usually with the date. We found that if you promote two dates at one time, that's better. So when I'm talking to somebody about going through membership class, I might say to them, "Look, would you like for me to sign you up for our April membership class? Or would the June membership class work better for you?" It's the law of the excluded alternative, that you don't give them the choice to say no. It's the choice between this, for either now or later as part of what your conversation might be.

That's part of learning to be a good asker. We'll come back to that just a little bit later. But then you want to hold these membership classes. Well, one of the pieces of advice that I will give you, is to shorten your class. So if you do a membership class, you really should be able to do this thing in two to three hours max. What you want to ask, is, "What is the minimum we need to cover?" And then cover everything else in future classes. So if you remember, there was a famous diagram about discipleship, and a lot of people have used

it. There's been, my former boss really made this popular, but it wasn't original with him, but it was like the baseball diamond. And it had these series of classes sometimes called 101, 201, 301, 401, and there was even a 501 as part of that.

What I like about that process, whether you adopt that language, or you use the baseball diamond or not, it doesn't matter. I actually think the bigger invention that this pastor brought, or the biggest innovation this pastor brought to the kingdom, was the concentric circles, not the baseball diamond. But what I do like about the baseball diamond, is it gives you permission to only do the minimal required in the first class. Then once they are an official member, you can then come in and offer these other classes and teach everything else. I mean, how much theology do they really need to know to become a member at your church? Then what do people want to know? Well, they want to know the mission of the church, the vision of the church, what's expected of them at the church. They might want to know a little bit of the history of the church.

So I like this idea of there's a membership class, and then there are these other classes after they become a member. The shorter you make the class, the easier that you make the class, the better. But it's not a 30-minute class, but it's also not a 30-hour class either. So just think that, you can argue with me later if you disagree, but just think about shortening your class. Then offer the class at multiple times and multiple days, and on different days, sorry. So offer the class at multiple times and on different days. Now, traditionally, the way we do membership class, and the most common way that we do it, is we have a service. We have a number of services. So after say the 11:30 service, which would end around 12:35, we would invite people to go upstairs and we provide lunch. One of the little tips if you do this, by the way, is provide two lunch options, and get them to RSVP for one of the options before they arrive.

So I like to call them on Thursday and say, "Hey, you're signed up for membership class this week. You want the chicken or you want the steak? You want the pasta or you want the chicken? Which one do you like?" So that also kind of locks in now their commitment before they arrive. Then we actually, as they're finishing lunch, we start membership class, as they finish lunch. That part is usually on video. So there's some videos for them to watch about the history of our church, a video about baptism that we do, different things.

Then we move to the lecture, or the teaching, the more formal teaching. Plates are cleared, or they might move to another room, or whatever. But we move to the lecture, the teaching of the class, and then we call for a decision. We have a time where they turn in their paperwork, which would be their covenant. Or if they're not signing the covenant, they at least turn in their paperwork. Then that would end, in our culture, sometime, it ends before 3:00 PM. So they get lunch and they get the membership class all in about two and a half hours. But here's the other thing I always do, is I promise them that it's going to be longer. So I tell them it is going to be 12:30 to 3:00 or as soon as the service ends, it's going to be 12:30 to 3:30 but then I like to end it at 3:15 or 3:00. And people always feel like it's better. If you end two minutes early, you are a hero. If you end two minutes late, you're a zero. So that's why I try to do a membership class. I don't always do that well in classes like this, but then that is the common practice that we do on Sunday after the service.

But then from time to time, we might do four times a year on Sunday, but then one time a year we might break it up and we might do it, this would be Sunday after church, then one time a year we might do it on a Sunday in the evening. With that one time a year we might do it on a Saturday morning and we might really blow it out with a nice breakfast that day or some kind of coffee bar. And I don't mean bar like drinks and things like that, although it would make for an interesting membership class. We could have a drunken membership class, but I digress.

Okay, that's only for the United Methodist. You can do that. Or the Lutherans. The Lutherans, they could

definitely do that. Yeah, that's right. And then maybe a couple of times during the year you might offer it on a weeknight and you might provide childcare particularly on this night. And it might be no meal on a weeknight, just snacks. And you can do that. I am not a big fan of online membership classes, but I do think that online is an option too. And you might need to do that two nights, 90 minutes at a time, something like that. But you want to vary it.

Now that's a lot of membership classes, so you wouldn't do all of those. You wouldn't do 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 membership classes. With that, we even at our size at The Journey, still only do membership class every few months. And I actually don't like to do membership class... So my minimum RSVP for membership class is about a dozen. And I actually prefer 20 people because if you have 20 signed up, you're always going to have a few that are no-shows. And so I like to have a nice group of 15 or so to go through that, but you have to adjust that for your size. I have worked with plenty of church plants that do it with less people or they do it five at a time. But it is best to have multiple families or multiple different groups of people than just husband and wife going through it because that's important.

But you want to think through the membership class because as we move to the benefits here and then look what's coming. Look what's coming down here. Okay, so the benefits to the person of that, their spiritual growth benefits to being a member, God honors their commitment to the church. And then as you think about this minimum number of people, you want to remember that this is very important. How people join is how they stay. And so if you have a well-thought-out serious process for membership, then you're going to get well committed or... Let's change it, mix it up. Highly committed members.

So there was my doctoral advisor for my DMin, he had a phrase that he called, "The high expectation church". The high expectation church. So there's nothing wrong with having high expectations for being a member. And I tell people at our church, "You can stay a regular attender for a long time, but there are spiritual growth benefits, there are obedience benefits, there's blessing benefits, there's being a part of something bigger than yourself benefits". And you can really unpack that biblically scripturally, practically as you invite people to do it.

And also, there's a lot of people that may take the step of salvation during membership class. They get saved during membership class. We do a video presentation of the gospel during membership class and some people get saved during that time. So it's not unusual for us to have 20 people in a membership class and maybe two people get saved during that class. You would say, "How did they? They've been attending all this time," and all that. Well, that's finally when they let us know that they get saved.

By the way, we found that having segments of your membership class on video, it allows you to keep the class shorter. It helps keep the class shorter. And I'll give you one example that. We do a segment in our membership class on the history of our church. And I do this while they're still eating. But what I found is every time I told the story, it kept getting longer and longer and longer and they're well done with their food. We're ready to move into the fill in the blank part, the more lecture oriented part of our class. So what we finally said is, "Look, let's not leave that to chance. Let's not allow Nelson to keep expanding it. Let's put it on video." So we recorded it and we had somebody put some pictures and history and they did a really nice short seven, eight minute video on the history of our church that now we can show.

And we do that with our core values too. We teach our core values during the membership class, but our teachers kept expanding, it kept getting bigger. So one of our better teachers, they took that, they took the core values, we did a nice little video presentation and now we know that segment's going to be 15 minutes.

And if you're the presenter of the membership class, gives you a chance to eat or go at the restroom while we're showing that 15 minute video. So that's really important, but that's a benefit for you, not a benefit for the person. But what are the benefits of a person saying yes to membership class? And then how often are you going to do your membership classes? And then are you challenging people properly when it comes to this invitation? So when you know you've got a good process, when you've got these classes on the schedule, now you structure the invitations around that.

So what I found is I don't have to talk about membership class every Sunday, but during the times of the year where we have the emphasis or at the end of the year when we're doing our last membership class, that's a really important time to give focus to this. So learn to think about and think through and present this invitation. It's an invitation that you really must master. And we've already talked about follow-up. This is when people sign up for the class and you call them and then you follow-up with them afterwards and all. And then I mentioned if you have that interest in the annual renewal process, I'm willing to put that together. Just put renewal process or membership renewal in the chat if you're interested.

All right, we're moving now toward our third invitation.

#3 The Call to Ministry Invitation

And this is the invitation for people to surrender to the call to ministry, surrender to the call to ministry. And so this is what I call the call to ministry invitation. And this is one that is amazingly absent from the modern church. I don't know why this one faded out of regular church life in so many churches. Maybe it's the rise of theological education. Maybe it's the rise of the quote, unquote, "professional clergy". I don't know what's going on here, but very few churches ever give much time to this particular invitation. And so this is the invitation that probably all of us listening right now answered at one time or another in our ministry. And that is somewhere along the way, somebody presented to us what it means to be a pastor, what it means to be a vocational minister, a full-time vocational minister.

And God used that invitation for us to say yes and to surrender. And so you remember that little Baptist church I was telling you, it was the first church that I pastored and then I preached in all these independent Baptist churches. Well, it was very common at the end of the service for me to extend a multi fold invitation. So I can preach on whatever, I'm preaching on David and Goliath. I'm preaching on Moses crossing the Red Sea or whatever it is, you preach on whatever it is. But then at the end you give the invitation and the invitation number one is to give your life to Jesus Christ, get saved. That's how they used to say it, "Get saved". And then the second invitation is join the church. Remember, we're going to vote on you right now, biggest sinner out there, but we're going to vote on you. This is how it used to be.

And then the third one is surrender to the call to preach, surrender to the call to preach. And we would see people, not every Sunday, but especially during revival meetings or tent meetings, there would be one or two young people that might surrender to the call to preach over the course of a period of time. Or there would be the occasional adult, maybe even a second career adult or somebody like me that was pursuing one avenue in college but felt called to shift and go into ministry. And we extended that call. Now I have to admit of all the times during those days when I extended that call I saw, I knew very few people would answer the call to ministry, but it's just the way we did it. Get saved, join the church, surrender to the call to preach.

Now later, we would mix in some of these other invitations that we're going to get to, but that was the three basic calls. Well, I don't know how those got lost over time. I do think that there's been some interesting research on this and it's beyond what we're doing here. And I would one day like to do a full resource on shepherds reproducing shepherds inside of the church. And so what I'm talking about here is you offering the invitation from time to time for someone to surrender to the call to be a pastor, missionary or full-time vocational or enter into full-time vocational ministry. And so they may not feel like they're a pastor or they may not feel like they're a missionary, but they're going into some type of vocational ministry. And however that's defined in your culture, there's all kinds of ways from the five fold ministries to church staff can be a... Somebody can be called to be an administrative assistant or they might even work in a ministry, but I'm really talking about church, local church stuff, but it could be bigger than that if you wanted to.

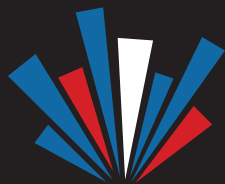
But this is a call that is absent. And I'm ashamed to say that as we lost that over time, I too lost it. After pastoring that little church there, that little Baptist church, I then went to do a graduate degree at Duke University. So I left that church and then I met that church planter. And just in his thinking of trying to build a church and grow a church, we never talked much about people coming to surrendering to the call to ministry. Although we did have one person during my two years there that did surrender to the call to ministry, went on to be an executive in Christian broadcasting. And today he actually is the president of a very well-known preacher's ministry. So it did happen even though we weren't very intentional about it. Now, afterwards, since then, this church has gotten a little bit more intentional.

But unfortunately, then I went on staff at a megachurch and it was hardly ever talked about there for, and maybe it was and I just didn't know about it, but it didn't seem like we had a lot of talk about the call to ministry. And then, probably my biggest regret up until this point in pastoring The Journey Church has been that I've not done enough to present the call to ministry. I was talking in earlier about we put the salvation testimony on the staff page, so on the pastor's staff listing on the website, staff website listing. Yeah, I mentioned that we have those videos of our testimony. And so we have a testimony video and we have a call to ministry video.

And we have only started, and this is why this was not going to take me very long to cover because we have only started thinking about our call to ministry process. But what I do know is we need to talk about it more. We need to tell our story more, tell our story of answering the call more. And then we need to challenge people to hear God's call. We need to give them a way to let us know that they are answering God's call and then we need to have follow up material to help them explore and deploy that calling.

So this is what we are thinking about and some of you do better than I do at this, but telling that story, right now for whatever reason in our culture, pastors are not held up in the esteem that they once were. Even good and godly parents are directing their children away from ministry pursuits or Bible pursuits and instead challenging them to go into STEM or to go into programming or different things like that. Go to another route when it comes to their education. So we've got to really raise the value of ministry and if there's any group that can do it, it's you. I mean each of you represent Christ well, you have a good ministry, you're pursuing this renegade way of abandoning average. So we have to raise the value of answering the call to ministry. And so when was the last time you extended that call?

When was the last time you talked about it? When's the last time you preached on it? There's some good passages about it that you can talk about. There's different ways that you can work it in. And so as we get into this, it is part of the leadership system inside the leadership system. A part of that is we reproduce leaders. And so certainly we want to reproduce small group leaders. We want to reproduce word smart



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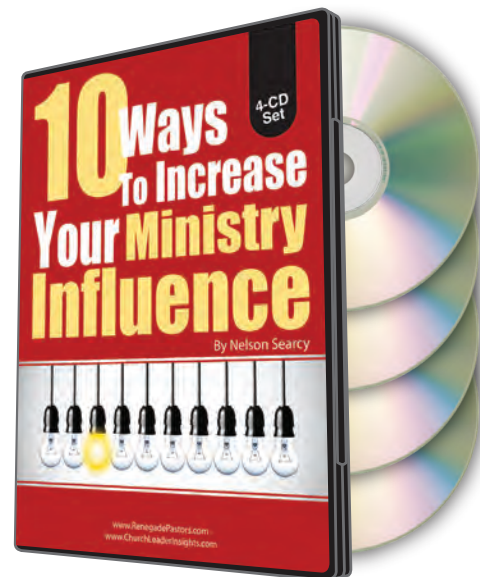
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leaders. We want to reproduce volunteer leaders in our church, but we also want to reproduce shepherds. And I found that there's great opportunities for people in high school and college to commit to ministry. There's also people that are mid-career and they switch. But then there's also people that have retired from one career, maybe military or teaching, and they have some kind of benefits that gives them a lot of freedom.

They've retired from one career and they answer God's call to this new career because they're still young. They were able to get maybe 20 years in teaching or 30 years in the military. And I don't know the exact numbers for when these retirement benefits kick in, but they're still in their forties, they're still in their fifties and they've got a long time to still give if Jesus doesn't come back and their time doesn't end on this earth. And back when I was doing a lot of training with church planters, I found that the second career people were some of the best church planters. You take the experience that you got from your first career and you use that now and you're much more confident, you're much more equipped for ministry. But this is where we might look and where we might focus.

One of the things that I'm constantly encouraging my megachurch friends to do, and if you have any opportunity to impact the summer camps that are denominational or nonprofit-driven, they're put on by these large youth agencies or your denomination puts it on, or maybe it's multiple churches going in together or maybe it's sponsored by a megachurch in the area. If you have any influence inside of those summer camps, challenge them to give one morning of the camp to explain the call to ministry and then cultivate those who respond.

Again, this is something that used to be very common and what little research has been done, it's been done in this area that we used to in every church camp for your student group, for your college groups, for your young career groups that go to these kind of events, they would take a morning or even every night, they might even offer the invitation. But that's been lost. And I've personally caught a number of megachurch pastors who are my good friends and I've done everything I possibly can to persuade them to do it. And I don't know what the reluctance is, but I've had minimal success in doing that. One big church in Texas, they have a great relationship with, they actually tried to hire me when their last pastor transitioned after being there for many years.

And they do their own summer camp every year and they have a thousand or more kids at that camp. And I used to say to this pastor, it was just at a lake a few hours from their church. And I would say, "I want you to go over there and take a morning service and just tell them how you came to be a pastor. Tell them what you do on a regular basis. Explain," they believed in the five fold ministry. "Explain what it means to be a missionary or to be an evangelist or to be a pastor teacher or whatever it might be," but they did some and they saw some. But part of the problem is we need a new paradigm for people who are called to ministry. And so what has happened is if a young person, and oh by the way, you know who does this better in general than anybody else in modern church life?

It's the African American churches or the traditional Black churches. And so I'll applaud those of you that are in that tradition. For whatever reason, the way the structure happens and the ministry of the way a pastor operates inside of a traditional Black church, the language that is often found inside of that tradition, it raises up a lot more young people and it's more part of your culture and these traditional Black churches to have young people around you, to have students around you, to have these, as one of my coaching guys calls them, "These guppies, these little fish," these little guppies that follow you around and you're trying to raise them up. Or as this other pastor that I know happens also come out of the Black church tradition, he called

them his, "Tadpoles". He had all these little young people around him that he was raising up and they would sit on stage with him and they would travel with him and they would do hospital visits with him.

And sometimes these were grown men that were in their twenties, but they were exploring this call to ministry. And what has happened is we have lost the paradigm. So we have this decline in Wednesday night Bible studies. So this used to be a place where people who were exploring the call to preach could teach. We no longer have Sunday evening services. This was another place where you could put the youth group up to preach or some younger person into preach. We no longer have student-lead services. We have a decline in sharing testimonies. And so this whole paradigm that we used to have of when someone surrenders to the call to ministry has gone away.

So, offer the challenge for you to tell your story. I want to invite you to celebrate those who do answer the call and to do everything you can to help them cultivate that call. And remember this little idea that what gets rewarded gets repeated. So what is celebrated is cultivated. And so when you celebrate people answering the call to ministry, you see more people who are called to ministry. Now here's what is not the problem, not the problem. God calling people to ministry, okay? That is not the problem. God is still calling people to ministry.

But, the problem is we are not cooperating with God to call out the called. So you see the difference? People say, "Well, there's a decline in the number of people who are going to seminary." Okay, I'm not talking about seminary. Actually, some of my best pastors have been those that didn't go to seminary or they did extension degrees while they were working at the church, but it really starts with us. And that God may be tapping people on their shoulder, but then their parents are saying, "No, no, you don't want to do that." Our culture no longer rewards that. So they get in the parable of the soil, the sun comes down and burns out their call or the birds poke at them and they don't want to answer the call. And yeah, sometimes people think they're called and they're really not. But then those that are truly called that, those fourth soil people, we don't raise them up.

We don't know who they are. We don't make the investment. We've not adjusted our paradigm to this call to ministry. So let's do what we can in doing this. And I would say to you now, and to anybody who is listening, if you have a good process, and I know for a fact there's two people that are listening right now as I'm teaching this live that really do a great job in this. And I can tell you a story and I don't want to embarrass him, so I'm going to be cautious with what I say. But this is someone who pastors a small church in a relatively obscure denomination, and probably the church has never had 200 in attendance during the course of his tenure. But out of that one church, over 15 young people or career ministers have surrendered to the call to preach.

And his legacy is incredible in this particular area. So this is just a reminder. It's not about church size, it's not about being in a prominent denomination, it's just about you and I being reminded that this is one of the invitations that we should extend. And how often do you do it? I'm going to leave that up to you, but a couple of times a year at least, keeping it in the culture, talking it up, making yourself available to meet, recording these videos of you on your website, building out your follow-up process for when someone does raise their hand and say that I'm called and building new language.

One pastor that I worked with has had very good success with what he calls, "God tapping you on the shoulder." And over and over throughout the year, not every Sunday, but at least semi-regularly. He says, "Maybe there's somebody here that God is tapping on the shoulder and saying, 'It's your time to enter into

full-time ministry’.

Maybe God is tapping you on the shoulder to say, ‘It’s your time to step out and enter ministry and be a pastor or step out into the mission field’”. And I think they’ve done a great job. And that phrase, “Tapping on the shoulder,” has gotten into the church’s culture. This is a church of 5/600 people, and they just know that this is the church sometimes where God taps somebody on the shoulder and says, “Okay, this is your path for college. This is your path for your career. This is your path for your second career. This is your path to the mission field. This is your path to be on church staff.” And this actually is in a white church. So even those of you that are not in that tradition I was talking about earlier, it’s something we can all focus on and see people called.

And I’m redoubling my efforts in this particular area as well. And so when we think about the benefits of someone saying, “Yes,” I think when we express the blessing of ministry, when we express our enjoyment of ministry, not downplaying how hard it is. When I first surrendered to the call to preach, I only knew two pastors and one pastor was very affirming, and he really helped me discern the call and really helped me put some real feet to what this call was. The other pastor, he tried to talk me out of it. He’s like, “What are you doing? You’re going to make all this money on this computer business. You’re going to go into electrical engineering.” Later, strangely enough, I went to work for that pastor one summer as a student minister because evangelism wasn’t very busy during the summer. You had to do a lot of revivals and things during the summer.

So I worked for him one summer and I finally got around to asking him, his name was David. And I said, “David, why? When I came back in that early days and I told you I was trying to go into ministry, why were you so tough on me?” And he said, “Well, Nelson, I thought if I could talk you out of it, you weren’t really called.” Now, there’s some wisdom in that, but you also have to balance that. Yes, we want to make sure that only called people are after it. But remember, the Bible says if you aspire to be a bishop or if you aspire to an office in ministry, that’s a good thing. So, find people who have that aspiration, who are sensing this calling and create a process to collect those, to shepherd those, and let part of your legacy be not just those you disciple, not just those you evangelize, but these shepherds that you raise up. And I think that’s really good.

Now, again, if you have a process or you have materials that you’ve developed that would be helpful, please get in touch with me, send those to our ministry, send those to my emails, give us a call. I would love to talk with you because I really want to build this out in a much bigger way than just the few minutes I had to do that here.

And so now let’s move on to the next invitation that we all must master. And we’re talking about asking, and this is one that’s been the most requested and it’s been one that many of you have said, “This is going to hit me right where I live.” And that is the volunteer invitation.

#4 The Volunteer Invitation

So we are going to broaden back out and get back into the world of salvation and get back into the world of what you do with the stage before we leave here, and I’ve got a gift for every senior pastor in this final invitation, ‘cause I think this is number four and number five, I’ve got a gift for every senior pastor, and we’re going to get back to what you do from stage and some structure.

But now I want to move into kind of a broader focus, and I want us to get into a piece of the ministry system. And the ministry system is how we mobilize volunteers in our church. One of the ideas I think is important as we think about calling out people to volunteer and raising up volunteers is to remember what is sometimes called the 80/20 rule or the Pareto principle. And the Pareto principle, when applied to church, says that 20% of your people will do 80% of the ministry.

Now, unfortunately, I found that church is one of the few places that actually violates the Pareto principle. And instead of it being 80/20 like it should be, in most churches, it's 95/5. And that is that you've got 5% of the people doing 95% of the work. And so we really got some work to do here. And then some of you have told me that coming out of COVID, your reality is maybe more like 99/1, that 1% are now carrying 99% of the load. But I do think it is a worthy aspiration to have 20% of your church volunteering one hour a week or more.

So that's my measurement, that's my goal, is 20%. Now you may say, "Well, that's not enough." Well, okay, you can adapt whatever goal you have. We actually do have... This is what we would consider the minimal measurement. We do have what we call a challenge goal, a challenge goal that we keep in the back of our mind. And that is 50% of our church volunteering one hour a week or more. And believe it or not, sometimes during growth group semesters, so nine months a year, 10 months a year, we might actually get close to that goal.

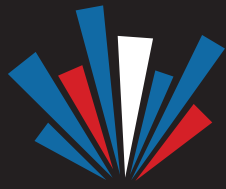
So one of the things you have to think about as you consider the volunteer invitation and as you think about moving toward this 20% is, do I have... And this is intentionally in bold, do I have enough volunteer spots for 20% of our church?

So if I mobilize... Say it another way. If I mobilize 20% of my church to volunteer one hour a week, do I have enough spots? So you see what I'm asking here. So one of the things you might want to do sometime is an exercise that I talk about in the big ministry seminar. The ministry system, and we'll go into detail in this when you join my senior pastor coaching, is you have to do what I call blanks on a page. So sometimes we have to sit down and create enough new volunteer areas so that we can add people to our church.

And so if you've only identified three areas where somebody can volunteer, God's not going to bless you with six volunteers. So now you got to add six spots, if you want to get six volunteers, or if you need to raise up nine volunteers, you got to do nine blanks. Or if you want to raise up 12, you got to do 12. I'm pretty good at counting by threes. I might have to take my shoes off here in a moment, but now you need 15.

But the idea is where in your church can you have volunteers? And so you want to think about that just a little bit. Where do people volunteer in my church and what are some entry level volunteer positions? And there are some positions that are not entry level. For example, I sometimes say at our church, you can be an usher that passes the offering. We use these offering buckets. You can be an usher that passes an offering bucket as an entry level, but you're not going to be a person who counts the offering at an entry level. So our offering counters, that's not an entry level position. Our offering passers, our offering collectors, that could be an entry level position, but it does require some training on that.

But there's some other places and you want to think through, what are these entry level positions? So one entry level position might be your ushers, although it is a difficult thing to try to get ushers to ush. You might need to raise up some greeters. A little trick on the greeters is find people... Let me just say it this way, find



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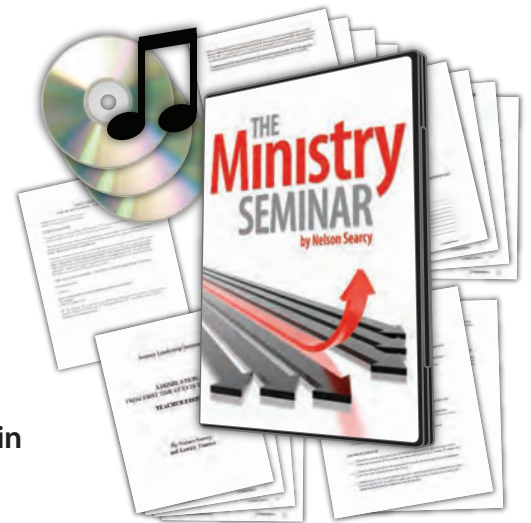
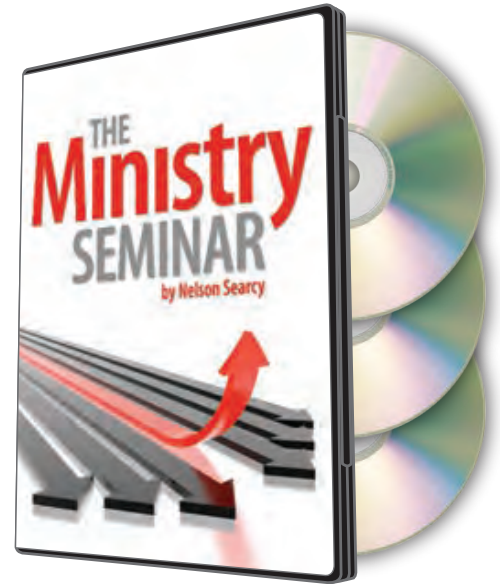
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people who know how to smile. So if you find happy people, I wish I could do the big grin, I don't know how to do that on this program I'm using. But find people who know how to smile and then recruit them to be greeters as opposed to finding people who don't smile and trying to teach them to greet. But anyway, put happy people out front. So maybe you have that. Maybe you have volunteer opportunities at the office. So we'll call it weekday opportunities that you might have.

Maybe you need to create some volunteer days or create opportunities for people to come in and serve on their lunch hour. Or people who might get off work early at 3:00 or 4:00 to come by the office for a couple hours or create some weekend opportunities in addition to Sunday.

Then you obviously have your age grade ministries where people can volunteer. Now a lot of those might require background check, but some would not, like helping to clean or turn around during the services or maybe serve at check-in or serve out front, directing traffic towards your age graded ministries. Or as they get older, maybe there's different places where they could serve. But I'm very careful about security when it comes to age graded opportunities.

We talk about in our worship leader training about having people serve in the worship team or the worship arts area of the church. So not just have one singer, but could you have multiple singers, not just one drummer. Could you have multiple drummers? Could you have a process where you raise up people? And then a big element is groups. This is everything from the leader of the group to the assistant leader of the group to the host where the group meets to designated titles, everything from the refreshment coordinator, the prayer request coordinator, the person who might fill in when the leader's out or something of that nature, the person who does the reminding of the group. You can give all kinds of titles inside of there and start raising people up. But the bottom line is you need what I call first serve opportunities.

Now you then want to try to fill these opportunities, but first you got to know what you're trying to do and what you're trying to accomplish and where you're going. And then you have to be ready to ask. And I put this quote in here by Ziglar. We have to be bold in our asking because Ziglar said, "Timid sales people have skinny kids." And so in other words, if you don't sell, you don't eat. And if you don't eat, your kids are going to be skinny. So you have not because you ask not when it comes to this idea of raising up volunteers. And so how do you go about doing that? What exactly do you do?

So we talked about the blanks on paper. We talked about identifying... First serve opportunities. Now you have to preach or challenge people to serve. You do that from the pulpit and maybe with your connection card on that. And you've got to learn how to do that. You've got to learn how to come at it in different ways. Then you might want to do testimonies from current servers. You might need to educate your people. I have a book called The Greatness Principle that is all designed to motivate people to serve, to help them understand their role in serving. And this is a little book, it's about 45 pages. I sell it to you at my cost. If you ever want to buy a case, we can hook you up with that.

But, we also have a training that goes with that you can do in your church that we've not really talked much about. But I actually did the training just recently and we've put my promotion materials, the video of me teaching it, my fill in the blank notes and all of that.

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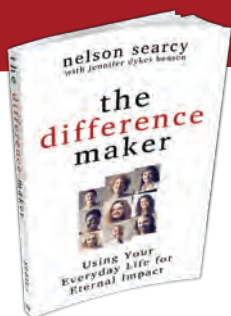
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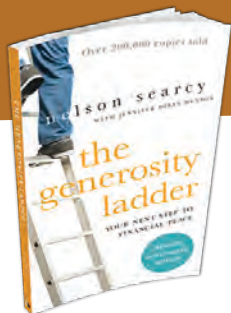


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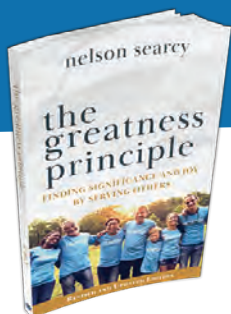


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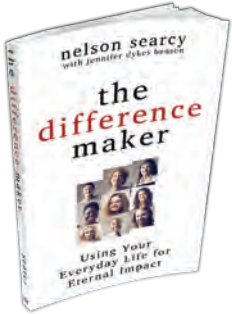
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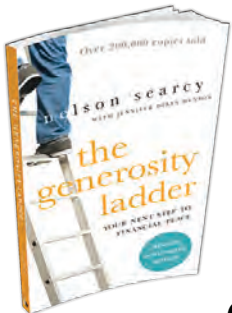
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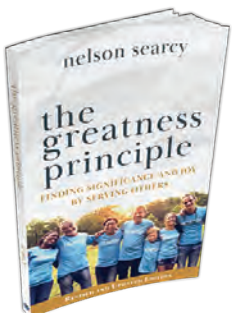
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of educating people. I noticed... I think he's still on the call, Bill Greg from Church Growth. And you can search and go to Bill Greg's site and you can find spiritual gifts inventories, and it can help people discover. And Bill, if you are on here, if you put your website in the chat, I'll share it here with the group. And so we have spiritual gifts inventories that you can have. I like the ones that are done that Bill and his group do.

So there's all kinds of different elements of this process. You can have a ministry fair where all the volunteer areas have a booth, all volunteer areas have a booth, and you collect interest with that. But then the biggest area for a lot of people is just one-on-one recruitment.

This is where you sit down face-to-face with a volunteer and you say, "I see in you an opportunity to make a difference. And I see in you that you have been given certain gifts and you have a certain personality. And so I want to invite you to try for a week or two or for a month serving in this particular area of our church." And then you wait. And again, you have not because you asked not, so be sure you ask. So, thank you for that website.

And so this is a great source for you when it comes to spiritual gifts inventory as well as a lot of other great Church Growth stuff. But I wouldn't expect you to do it. That's why I didn't have the website. I thought it was churchgrowth.org, but then I started second guessing myself. So thank you for that.

And Bill Greg, glad to have you on this. He's the brains behind this, and he's a great Church Growth thinker, great publisher, published my first book, first three books actually when he was the head of Regal Publishing. And now he oversees this website, churchgrowth.org. And they have a number of different spiritual gifts inventory based on your church and maybe what your unique beliefs are about the spiritual gifts.

And so you can do all that together. And in this training for The Greatness Principle that we have, I do recommend you get their inventory and use that as a 30-minute segment during your two hours of teaching The Greatness Principle. But nothing is going to replace the one-on-one recruitment. And so you might need to do an entire sermon series as well. And then you might need to do a shadow day where you allow people in certain areas to encourage them to find somebody in the church and shadow.

But this is really just an area of great need, and I understand that. But remember, when it comes to raising up these volunteers, you never need a volunteer. So the question is never.... So never, "How many do we need?" You never want to use the word need. You want to do better than that. You want to have better benefits than that. You want to have a better call to action than that.

So the better question is, "How many can we mobilize?" So you want to think maximum number, not minimum. And if you set this maximum number and you begin to pray for it... Maximum... I'm not sure if that's right or not, but it's the maximum number, not the minimal. So a lot of churches live in this scarcity mentality of just how few can we get by with. No, it's not how few you can get by with, it's how many can you mobilize? And then you open up and then you start thinking creative ways to talk about it and to share it.

So one of the things that I think about is that there are serving seasons. And so for every area of our church, there's a season. So if you're part of our front of house team, the ushers, the greeters, the set up, the tear down, all of that, this front of house team, they have two seasons per year. I mean pretty equally divided

throughout the year. If you're on the worship arts team, they have two seasons, but they run it more like seven and five, seven months and five months. So they have a short season and a long season. And then if you're doing the growth groups, we have three seasons or three semesters is what we talk about as part of that. And if you're working in kids, they too, they have three semesters that kind of parallel the school calendar, the fall, the spring, and then the summer.

And it doesn't exactly overlap with those. But here's where I'm going with that. When you sit down and you do some structure for your serving, it then allows you to know where to put your emphasis. So what we can say is, "Okay, in the month of December, we're going to recruit a new growth group volunteers for the next spring," or, "For next..." In this case, "February." And then we say, "Okay, we've got a new season for worship arts that's going to kick off in May." So we would back up and say, "In April, we're going to recruit new members for our five-month worship arts team season." And so this allows me to know when and where to put the focus. So we're not just always pushing everything in front of people. Every week, people can express interest in serving. They do that mainly on their connection card.

But then every start of a specific season, based on the teams, we give an emphasis, we give a focus to that serving area. And what you'll find is some of these can be filled very easily, and then some of them require much more of a process. So filling the front of house, that can be pretty easy. With your kids' area or your worship arts, that's a little more difficult. Getting growth group leaders might be a little more difficult, but finding hosts or co-leaders or prayer coordinators, all that can be very easy.

But this is a place where knowing how to make the ask and doing it properly is very powerful. And I'm going to give you some tips at the end here in a moment that will help you with making the ask when it comes to your volunteers.

But when you sit down and you put those blanks on the paper, like I was talking about here, and you set that goal to mobilize 20% of your church, you'll be amazed at just how these exercises of setting a goal, of knowing where you have opportunities, not needs, remember, opportunities for people to serve, you'll be surprised at the creative input that you're going to get from the Holy Spirit that you'll get from your team, and then the blessing that will come when you offer these challenges and you say, "Well, where do I offer these challenges?" Well, right here.

You offer them through your preaching. You offer them through having people are currently serving from current volunteers to give their testimony. You do it through offering things like The Greatness Principle seminar. You do it by teaching on the spiritual gifts. You do it through ministry fairs. You do it through one-on-one recruitment. You do it through a sermon series. By the way, every three years, you should do a four-part sermon series on serving. And just like I have the book called The Greatness Principle, I have a four-part teaching series called The Greatness Principle as well, and we can help you with any of that as you look forward to implementing it. Shadow days and some of these and ministry fairs and some of that I go into in my bigger ministry system seminar.

And then you start thinking with abundance, not scarcity. You define the serving seasons, and you'll be amazed at how as you get organized, there used to be an old phrase called, "Organize to evangelize." And that's true when it comes to evangelism. But it also is true when it comes to recruiting volunteers. And what we have to understand, and I'm going to say more about this in my wrap up in a few minutes, is the benefits to the person serving are profound. If you're not serving, you're not growing. And I often tell people, if I could summarize what it means to be a Christian, if I could summarize living the Christian faith in one word,

it would be the word servant.

And so teaching people to serve, to humble themselves and serve. And so it is in their best interest. It is in the best interest of the person you are talking to step up and serve. And what you want to do is you want to give them a chance to test the waters. They can serve just for a week or for a month, and give it a try. Give it a try. That's a very powerful phrase. "I'm not asking you to commit forever." That's what I say in my coaching. "Just give it a try for three months, give it a try for six months. Yeah, you might be out of a little time. You might be out of a little money, but by that point, you're going to be so addicted to the results that you're going to want to stay. So give it a try and then let's evaluate."

And then you may move from a temporary position to a more permanent position where you're committed for a season. Easier for me to spell. So give it a try and say, "Look, test the waters. Give it a try for a few weeks." Check back in with them. And you learn how to recruit. You learn how to ask, you learn how to evaluate, and then you give them permission to take a break and to switch areas. And so you create all of this inside of this invitation.

Now, when people say, "I'm interested," you can have a regular conversation with them. Every week on our connection card, learn more about serving at The Journey. That's on our connection card. That's a next step every week. And believe it or not, there's rarely a week that goes by where somebody doesn't mark that next step. And yes, we have these big pushes that we do throughout the year, and then we have that big push we do every three years, but week to week, like a little trickle, we continue to add people and to learn more about serving.

I'm not going to do an Amazon giveaway here. Instead, I'm going to give every senior pastor who wants it... So if you're listening right now live, I'm going to tell you how to get it. If you're listening on a recording, this is probably going to be with the recording. You can get it too. But I have a little resource called When a Volunteer Says No. And what I do in this resource is I go into how to phrase your asking for volunteers, how to be ready when they say yes, and then how to be ready when they say no. And one of the things that I've learned is that no is not a stop sign. No is a fork in the road.

And unfortunately in the English language, we only have one word for no. And that's no. But a lot of times when a volunteer says no, what they're really saying is, "No, but if you give me a little more information, I'll do it." Or "No, not now, but come back and talk to me a little bit later." Or they may say, "No, not what you're asking me to do, but I am interested in something else." And that's the no redirect.

And so what I've done in this resource is I've divided up and I've explained, what are the different parts of a no, because rarely does somebody give you a "No, not ever," or what Paul might call a meganoito. Rarely does somebody give you that kind of strong no. Most of the time, the no is sort of much more nebulous. And there's a classic country song called "What Part of No Don't You Understand?" Well, there's a lot to that when it comes to what the song is talking about, which is asking someone on a date. But the thing this song reveals is that there are parts of a no.

There's a no, never in a million years, and you rarely get that. But there's also a no, not now. No, not this, no to the particular thing you're asking. And if you learn to handle that and know what to do when a volunteer says no, you can raise up a lot more people too.

So if you are a senior pastor and you want this resource, just contact me ns@RenegadePastors and just tell me you want the resource, When a Volunteer Says No. And so we're not going to do an Amazon giveaway on this particular point, but we'll pick it up here as we will pick up the other giveaway at the end. So I'm happy to give you that. Let me just put it on the screen. The resource is called When a Volunteer Says No, and the way you get it is you just email me and let me know. Again, no obligation. We're going to send you a link so that you can download that and you can engage it. And it's going to tie in with a lot of what we've talked about. Okay, When a Volunteer Says No.

All right, the sun is beginning to set right outside my window. Look how shiny my face is. I must have been working. So... working. By the way, thank you for staying with me. We've only lost a handful of people throughout. I can see when you log in and log out, I try not to pay attention to it because it demotivates me when you log out, or it breaks my heart, really to see that somebody left. So just remember you stay on to the end. We're going to move this giveaway to the very end. So we'll end with a giveaway, but we've got two more giveaways to do and another resource that we're going to play with here in just a moment.

#5 The Baptism Invitation

So now we're up to our final invitation, and I really... this, in the flow, this one should be second. It should be salvation, baptism, membership, calling out the call and then volunteers would've been the proper order. But I wanted to do it out of order because this one doesn't take very long to cover. And so I wanted to put it at the end. And then I knew that volunteer is such a big need right now that I wanted to spend a little more time on that one.

But this is obviously... what is it? It's the challenge to obey Jesus by being baptized. And also, I realize that our network is very diverse. At our church, we practice adult believers baptism by immersion. I do understand the different modes of baptism. Remember, I went to Duke Divinity School, so most of my colleagues were Methodist pastors at that school. And then I've coached, as you know, everything from AME Zion, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, all the way down to Vineyard. There might be a denomination with a Z that I've coached, but I haven't been able to find them. So the pluses I've got to that.

So I realized there's a lot of diversity in baptism, so that's okay. But even the churches I know that practice Paedobaptism, they also have usually a process for adult baptism. And because more and more people are outside of the church, they're not growing up in church, they're not growing up in that tradition, or they're coming maybe from another tradition like a Roman Catholic tradition or even coming from some "cults" where they might've been baptized as a child and they need to be baptized in a Christian Church. And so there's a lot of different reasons why people would need to be baptized even if you don't practice adult believers, baptism or your mode of baptism is not immersion. So I'm okay with that because that's not what we necessarily deal with the church systems or in my coaching.

But for the purpose here, since many of you in some way or another do some kind of adult baptism, that's really what I want to focus on. But I think we would all agree that it is part of the great commission to baptize people in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and this is part of the evangelism system.

So just a couple of things that I want to talk about when it comes to baptisms. One, let me pull this one up here to be first. One of the things that you might need to do if you're going to increase your baptisms is to plan more baptisms. And when you plan your baptism, you start out here with your baptism date and you

say, okay, we've got this date that we're going to do baptism. And then you back it up and say, okay, what do I need to do first? So I'm going to preach on it, and then I'm going to have a testimony of someone who's going to be baptized. Then I'm going to challenge and have sign ups, and all of that's going to go into the baptism date. So the date helps you determine when you're going to extend the invitation.

Now, every week we have a next step on our connection card, learn more about baptism. And maybe for you it's learn more about water baptism, if that's your phrase or whatever it might be. And also in our new believer follow-up, in the new believer follow-up we try to teach them and encourage them to make their first step of obedience, that a baptism. So from the very moment they become a believer, we're trying to educate them about baptism, and baptism does require education. So educate your people on baptism and then make baptism a celebration. But you might need to think about three or four approaches that you will take to challenge three or four approaches to challenge people to be baptized. So what are those approaches going to be? Maybe it's from the pulpit.

We get a lot of people to be baptized through our membership. Maybe it's through serving covenants. We also get a lot of people who want to be baptized because they're going to be a growth group leader or they're going to serve on the worship arts team, and baptism is a requirement in that. You want to work it into your groups with that. And then of course, one-on-one you want to challenge people to be baptized, and you can make baptism a celebration by inviting the entire group or the entire church to be a part of that.

And then you want to vary the types of baptisms. So for example, you want some to be smaller and more intimate because some people would rather be baptized like that. Some people want to be baptized in front of the entire church. And then some people want to be baptized at a big outdoor party like at the river, the lake, or the ocean, and it can be really incredible. So some people, they love the big celebration. Boy, I want to be baptized outdoors and natural water and a big celebration. Others, nope, if you've got a church baptistry, let's just do it in the service. I'll bring my friends and all that. And then others might, no, I want to do it as a special baptism celebration. Maybe just two or three families being baptized in a smaller, more intimate setting. So we want to understand that.

Now when you're doing your baptism, just to tie it back, remember that you want to give a gospel presentation at your baptisms. And again, it's probably a 5 to 10 minute version. But maybe while they're getting changed or before you do the first person or before you do the last person, you might want to give a gospel presentation at your baptism. And this is not for the candidates who are being baptized, it's for their friends or family. And so encourage them to invite their friends and family. And then sometimes you might want to call for impromptu baptisms. Now this again, can be different on your heritage and denomination, but maybe you've got a big outdoor baptism in progress. And in the middle of that you present the gospel and you say to people, look, maybe you came here today and you didn't think you were going to be baptized, but you just prayed that prayer with me. Well, you know what? Come on in the river, come on in the lake, the only requirement to be baptized is to just tell me that you are a follower of Jesus. We do that at most of our baptisms. And we have shorts and T-shirts and extra towels and all of that for people to give their impromptu baptism if they want to do it. Now, you can think about that.

But the benefits of a person saying yes just cannot be overstated. I mean, I really believe it is a tremendous hindrance to spiritual growth to delay baptism. So I fundamentally believe that. And so I challenge, I talk it up, I preach on it. Every time I come to it in scripture I take time to explain it. I have a brochure that spells out the benefits. And you can get a lot of this in a resource that I have on maximizing baptism.



RELATED RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

THE MAXIMIZING BAPTISM SEMINAR

Break through the barriers to baptism in your church

Three-hour seminar + sample files and documents!

Are you MAXIMIZING the celebration of Baptism in your church? Do you have an effective plan to help people decide to be baptized and move forward from that decision to celebration and discipleship after their baptism?

There are people in your church right now who need and WANT to get baptized, but they just need your help!

What kind of help? Well, that depends. Some aren't sure how to sign up, others have questions about how baptism works, and still others are nervous about being put on the spot in front of people.

In fact, there are several common reasons why people aren't taking the step of obedience to be baptized in your church. Once you know these reasons and put a system in place to educate and encourage people, **you'll immediately begin baptizing more of them.**

In The Maximizing Baptism Seminar, Nelson Searcy has developed a valuable five-step system that will equip you to PROMOTE, PREPARE, PREACH, PRESENT and PRESERVE every baptism in your church.

In this powerful, easy-to-implement resource you will learn:

- How you can increase the number of people who sign up to be baptized (you probably have more people interested than you realize... they're just not telling you)
- The reasons why people are saying "No" to being baptized (hint: it's not because they're not spiritually ready)
- The power of your preaching to mobilize people to sign up for baptism
- How to help people overcome their fear of being baptized (and what those fears are)
- The specific steps you can take to ensure that every candidate is prepared to be baptized
- All the details and logistics that will make your baptism celebrations run smoothly
- The secrets to transforming baptism into a church-wide celebration
- How to follow up with every person after their baptism so that they'll continue to grow in their relationship with Christ
- Specific steps to move people from baptism to membership in your church
- Plus much more!



This resource contains 3 hours of audio training, fill-in-the-blank listener's guide, leader's guide, checklist, sample emails, letters, promo materials and more!

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Now, there are four barriers to baptism, at least, and you want to overcome all of these barriers. I'm going to run through them real quick. So these are what I call the top four barriers to baptism. So if you're talking to somebody and they're resistant to being baptized, keep these four objections in mind. One is they're not saved, so you're trying to move them to be baptized, but the spirit's not calling them, and it's because they're not saved. And this can be somebody who sits in a pew every week, somebody who attends regularly, they've been around your church for a long time. And you're like, why are they so resistant to baptism? Well back up and let's go back to that first invitation, that evangelism invitation, that gospel invitation because the Holy Spirit's not going to pull them and draw them to baptism if they're not a follower of Jesus. And I believe that's the only biblical necessity for being baptized is that you're saved.

But then for some people, it's not enough information. They don't have enough biblical information about baptism. They don't have enough historical information about why you do baptism the way that you do. This is where you can give scripture. You can give quotes from people in your denominational tradition or famous Christians throughout the year, or they don't have enough practical information. What do I wear? What do I have to say? How long is it going to take? That's part of it. And then we talked about lack of opportunities. You want to vary the days and the types and locations of your baptism. So some people, maybe they can't do it on Sunday, they got to go to work right after, but they would do it during the week or they would do it at the beach. Some people want the small setting like I talked about. Some people prefer it to be more exciting, they'd like to be baptized with a crowd. So some of that is why people can't get baptized.

I have on occasion done private baptisms. I had someone one time who had a physical handicap, actually many times. But I mean the one that I'm thinking of in particular, I think it's a little bit funny, I don't have much time to tell you. But it was a guy who had a toupee and he did not want to be baptized at the church because he was afraid he was going to lose his toupee. So we did a private baptism for him at a pool that we had access to. He invited some friends and family members where he didn't mind going a natural, and we baptized him and it was unique. But then of course, sometimes you have to vary the type of baptism because of the opportunity that might be required for a handicap situation and we've had a lot of those where we've had to vary our mode of baptism because someone couldn't move or whatever the case might be.

And then there's fear. The peer pressure, that can be a fear, family pressure. I mean, a lot of times, especially in our New York location, people tell us, look, if I get baptized my family's going to know that I'm a Christian and they're going to disown me. They come from a tradition where it just doesn't happen.

But then there's also, I don't know what the official name of it is, I know it has one, but there's just the fear of water. Some people are just afraid to get in water or go under the water. So letting them go in with a friend or letting them wear a swimming cap or one of those things on their nose or whatever. I mean, that's a real fear for a lot of people, particularly if you do immersion. In fact, I saw one time that almost 12% of the population expresses some kind of fear of water over their lifetime. So that's just something to keep in mind, a little bonus teaching there for you.

But remember, anytime someone expresses interest, when you've got a new believer, you want to follow up on that new believer. If someone expresses interest on your website or on your connection card or in a conversation with you want to make a follow-up. And then sometimes you need to be intentional about meeting with folks to discuss baptism. So say, hey, can I get a phone appointment with you? Can you come by the office? Can we meet after the service? And you help them take that next step. But for us, you can't be a member if you're not baptized and then we track every new believer and go really after them in a one-on-

one phone call and strategy and mailings and moving them toward baptism.

I have this resource called Maximizing Baptism. And we have created this resource that's normally \$300 or so, sometimes on sale for 199, but that's about the lowest it ever goes on sale. We really just want to make it a no-brainer for you to get it for being here at the conference. I have some resources that have never paid for themselves. In other words, we have not paid back what we invested in the resource. Unfortunately, this is one of them. A lot went into this resource, but also it's not something that every church will buy, so I just can't give it away like I could the Volunteer Says No resource. But we just tried to make it an incredible low investment for you if you want to go deeper into that.

And I have a whole section in there about how to preach on baptism. I have sample sermons, I have sample emails, follow up letters. We deal with the barriers to baptism. And then I give you my best 10 ideas for how to double your baptisms. And that would be another thing I would say is pray for God to double your baptisms by doubling the number of new believers at your church.

And so let me move through this and try to bring it to a landing. But let me wrap up with some general thoughts on just extending invitations. First of all, let me remind you of the results of not asking. So because you're not asking, because you haven't made a big ask of yourself to learn how to make a big ask of others, and you just ignored what I had to say, or you're not willing to do any additional next steps from what I've been talking about. You're going to be an overworked pastor. Whenever I see an overworked pastor, I generally think this is someone who doesn't know how to ask for help, because that's not God's plan. Remember, you have just enough time to do God's will. And if you're overworked, if you're busy, if you can't say yes to things, it's because you either have pride and you think only you can do it, or you need to learn how to become a better asker.

It also hinders discipleship. And this not only for you, it's a good spiritual growth process, leadership growth process to learn how to ask. But more importantly... What does they think it needs to be? Oh, they think it needs a period. It hinders the discipleship of your congregation because the more people serving, the more people growing. So just remember that equation. More serving equals more growing, and that's the rule of discipleship.

Then it also hurts your evangelism. People are getting saved under the preaching, but you're not calling them to identify through the gospel invitation process or you're not challenging them to be baptized. And so there's people just out there that are being hurt in this area because you're not extending the invitation. And then likewise, it holds back spiritual growth, which goes back to this one. It slows your overall church growth. Growing churches have about 20% of their folks serving in some way.

They have regular baptisms, they have a good membership process, they are calling out the call with that, tapping on the shoulder and all of that. Then you have projects or ministry areas, I hate to say programs, but ministry areas that fail or they're understaffed because you don't have the people, and that's because you're not asking. You have not because you ask not. And this is, I realize, a growing edge for you as a leader.

Now, remember I said earlier, most nos are not dead ends. They're only forks in the road. So when somebody says no the first time you the gospel or no to your baptism challenge or no to becoming a member, that's okay. Come back. Circle back around. Think about it. Ask questions. Diagnose it. Figure it out. Be persistent, keep on asking, keep on knocking, keep on praying.

But then just a couple of thoughts on this I want to read. In our world of asking people to step up, people will often say no to what's good for them. And we have to realize that nobody grows until they say yes. We have to learn to persuade because we care about our people. Part of a shepherd's role is to persuade. We motivate and clarify. We try everything that we possibly can because no one grows until someone says yes. And I mentioned this, it's good to study basic salesmanship, persuasive language, structure of questions. You don't want to serve, do you? You don't have time to serve, do you? You're already super busy so I know this is not something you're going to want to do. Those are not good structures. You know how to structure questions, but maybe you can start with some of Zig Ziglar's books on sales, and if you need some help on that, just let me know. We can talk about it in the Deeper Coaching Networks.

A good ask, okay? Just jot down these notes. A good ask... Am I saying ask? Is the K coming through? I've been talking for a long time. People say, why do you need to do a seminar? Am I not sharing my screen? Did that go away? Did I do that? All right, so let me go back. You didn't even get all that. Okay, so I was reading that. I think I taught all that. So there it is. So that's everything I just said before I forgot that I wasn't sharing my screen.

And then this is something I want you to jot down. So how can you jot it down if I'm not showing it to you on my screen? So just to kind of summarize a good ask. So if you want to make a good ask of others in yourself, a good ask is one that's prayerfully considered. So all of this should be bathed in prayer, prayerfully thought through. It must be practiced skillfully, I've tried to help you do that today. But I hope I've just put you on your journey to be a better Aladdin asker. It's got to be positioned purposefully. In other words, there's a right place for each of these ask. There's a right time for each of these ask. Sometimes you need to sit down with somebody in your office, sometimes you need to do it after the service, sometimes you do it from the pulpit, sometimes you do it on Sunday, sometimes you do it on Monday. You want to think about how you want to position and make the ask purposefully in the right place at the right time.

It must be presented boldly. Give it a try. I think you can do it. I believe in you. I'll be there each step of the way. I have faith. I'm prayed up. I'm practiced. I have a purpose for what I'm doing. And then I ask boldly. And then once I make the ask, I pause awkwardly. Okay, that was an awkward pause. And the reason why is once you say, should I sign you up for the baptism that we have coming up in February that's going to be at the church or would you prefer to be at the one in April that we're going to do down at the lake? And you wait and you let the Holy Spirit convict, and you realize that the next person who speaks is going to be the one that is making the decision. So if you speak next, it's probably going to just go in a different direction. But you let them respond. You let the Holy Spirit work when you make that ask. And it can only be seconds, but it can feel like an eternity just like it did there for us.

And then you'd want to be prepared for various responses. They might say yes, they might say no, but remember there's different kinds of nos. They might say, let me think about it. They might say, let me talk to my spouse. Be ready for all of that and then properly follow up. I'm telling you that right there, that could be a book. So if you want to write it with me, let me know how to make a good ask, a master asker. All right.

I'm asking you to take what we've learned today and become the kind of person that ask people, that invites people to give their life to Jesus Christ, to then challenge them to obey Jesus in obedience and be baptized. And then as they follow and grow in obedience, to commit to the church, to stop dating the church, and instead, commit to be a fully engaged member at the church to sign the covenant to fulfill those commitments. And as part of that commitment, to discover your gift and find your spiritual gifts and find

your place of service where you will experience the significance and blessing that comes and the growth that comes from growing others. And then maybe just as you do all of this, the Holy Spirit might tap you on the shoulder and call you out of the path that you're on now and move you onto the path of vocational ministry. And if you say yes to any of those invitations, I commit to you as your pastor that I will be there with you every step of the way to make sure you succeed, to provide wisdom, to provide prayer support, and to provide encouragement.

So are you ready to take that step?

Senior Pastor, make the **ONE** decision that will accelerate your growth and transform your church...

Step Up Today to Nelson Searcy's LIVE Senior Pastor Coaching Network — Enrollment Open Now!

The decisions you make **NOW** have the potential to stall or supercharge your church this year.



And the decision to upgrade to this new systems-focused coaching network could have the single-greatest impact on the health and growth of your church over the next 12 months!

Nelson is personally leading this network to help Renegade Pastors like you reach your MAXIMUM potential and exponential church growth through intensive focus on the **8 Systems of a Healthy Church®**: Assimilation, Stewardship, Evangelism, Small Groups, Worship Planning, Ministry, Leadership and Strategy.

- Lead to **30% growth** in your church next year.
- Position your church to be **more Kingdom-impacting than ever**.
- **See more people come to faith** over the next year than at any other time in your church's history... and see that repeated over and over in years to come.
- **Restore broken or ineffective systems** to serve the next season and next generation
- **Maximize your Online Church** service as a regular part of your church's Kingdom impact in a way that benefits your people, your community and the world.



Nelson Searcy is the Founding and Lead Pastor of The Journey Church, with locations across New York City and in Boca Raton, FL. By God's grace, he identified and developed the **Eight Systems of a Healthy Church®** that he has used to coach over 3,500 churches in the US and around the world. He is the author of over 100 church growth resources and 20+ books.



New Network At a Glance:

- * Guided Monthly Coaching Experience to Help You Master All Eight Systems of a Healthy Church®
- * Led by Pastor Nelson Searcy
- * One Tuesday Each Month
2:00pm - 3:30pm Eastern Time
- * LIVE Via Zoom
Every Training is Recorded

As you prepare to upgrade to this new network, please consider that:

- The average increase in attendance is **25%**
- The average increase in giving is **20%** of your overall budget.
- **One** new tither will pay for this network.
- Nelson will be there **step-by-step** to help you implement.
- Unlike other coaching networks, you get **EVERYTHING** you need to work the systems.

TAKE ACTION NOW AND STEP UP TO NEW SENIOR PASTOR COACHING
— HURRY, SPACE IS LIMITED!

You'll receive over \$13,155.95 in resources and total value in just the first year!

For more information, including the next start date, and to secure your spot:
www.ChurchLeaderInsights.com/Growth

Enrollment Open Now — Save Your Spot Today!

Master the Latest and Greatest on All Eight Systems of a Healthy Church® with Nelson Guiding You LIVE via Zoom Every Month



One Tuesday Each Month | 2:00pm – 3:30pm Eastern Time

WHAT IS THIS COACHING NETWORK ALL ABOUT?

This brand new online Senior Pastor Coaching network will be the culmination of the secrets Nelson has learned from coaching 3,500 pastors while leading a growing church. You will discover classic church growth principles combined with the **Eight Systems of a Healthy Church®** — but now completely updated to meet our new post-Covid reality. As part of this network, you will receive:

- ✓ **Monthly 90-minute LIVE Coaching Sessions with Nelson over Zoom:**
Hands-on coaching from Nelson on all eight systems — Evangelism, Assimilation, Worship Planning, Small Groups, Ministry, Stewardship, Leadership and Strategy.
- ✓ **Monthly Bonus Coaching Calls with members from all Coaching Networks** — additional training plus Q&A Sessions with Nelson and the team.
- ✓ **Private Online Coaching Hub:** A portal to all session recordings, resources, archives, decade-long library of book summaries, church growth report, and much more! Everything in one place.
- ✓ **A proven road map** to grow your church in today's challenging environment, including how to increase in-person attendance while also maintaining an effective online church presence.
- ✓ **Unlimited email access** to Nelson and the entire CLI team.
- ✓ A monthly environment where you can connect with others to learn, grow, read, and answer questions every step of the way.
- ✓ An opportunity to **restore broken or ineffective systems in your church.**
- ✓ A path to become an expert on church growth principles and healthy church systems. **A similar one-year Doctor of Ministry class (and this coaching is far more practical) would cost up to \$3,990.00 plus twice as much time and far more travel costs.**



Each month you'll receive **FREE** supplemental bonus resources (total annual value over \$3,399.95)



3-MONTH FULL REFUND GUARANTEE: If anytime during the first three months, you feel this isn't right for you, keep all your monthly resources and bonuses and receive a full refund of all 3 months of your investment.

ENJOY THESE FAST-ACTION BONUSES WHEN YOU JOIN TODAY!

* **FREE** 2-Day Church Marketing Workshop — complete audio resource plus 300+ page workbook PDF featuring dozens of marketing samples! (\$599.95 value)



* **FREE** One-on-One 15-minute Phone Call with Nelson (\$99.00 value)

* **FREE** Maximizing Easter Online Training and Planning Your Preaching Calendar Online Training (\$299.95 value)

* **Two FREE** Sermon Series of your choice upon initial registration (\$399.95 value)



"This network has been **the best investment for me and our church.** It was the catalyst needed to get me out of the rut of routine when we

planted the church. And now it is the **vital resource for equipping and encouraging** sustained implementation of the systems in our local context."

— **Earl Grant, Covenant Community Church, San Antonio, TX**
Renegade Pastor Titanium Coaching Member

Hurry, starts up soon and space is limited! Learn more and save your spot here:

www.ChurchLeaderInsights.com/Growth

Questions or want to talk to someone ASAP? Email Nelson at nelson@churchleaderinsights.com or call 561.921.8488, ext. 6.