

*Movement
Essential
Tool*

PERSON OF PEACE TOOL

...

*Learning evangelism from
the best who ever lived*

100
MOVEMENTS

INTRODUCTION



What if Jesus was possibly more specific and detailed in the instructions he gave his disciples regarding evangelism than he was about anything else? Would that change the way we think about evangelism and how we engage with people who don't know Jesus?

What if Jesus was the most brilliant evangelist who ever lived, taught his disciples to do the exact same things, and we have the same opportunity before us?

TWO BY TWO



Luke 10:1-2 says this:

“After this, the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. And he said to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.’”

He sends out 72 with a specific task and says, “There is a harvest!”

In another passage about evangelism, Jesus uses the same metaphor of a harvest, explaining the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13:18-23:

“Hear then the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this

Who are these people? They are gatekeepers to a network of relationships of good soil. The task Jesus gives us: Look for these people.

In Luke 10:16, Jesus says, “The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

In other words, the very fact that they are open to YOU means they might be open to JESUS. They could be good soil and they might be gatekeepers to a whole group of people whom the Father has prepared in advance and are now ready to come into the Kingdom.

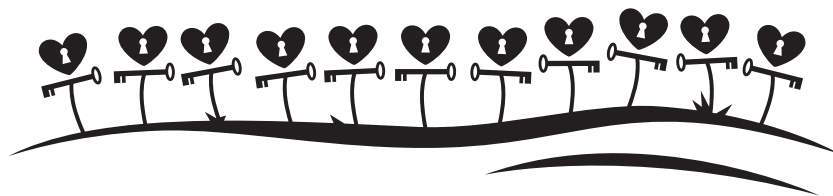
So let’s pause here and break down what Jesus did, instructed the 12 to do, and in this passage in Luke 12, is instructing the 72 to do. If we want to learn how to do something, it’s always good to learn from the best. And Jesus was certainly the best at this.

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LITMUS

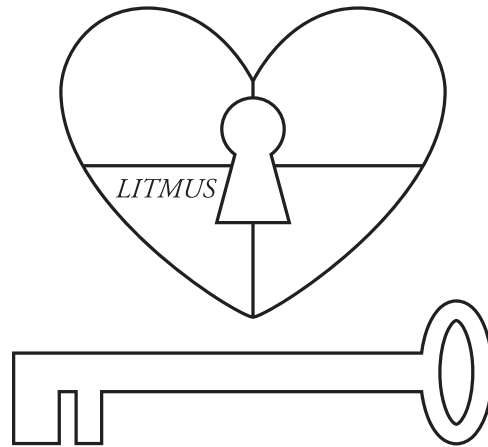


Remember that Jesus tells them there is a Kingdom harvest on the horizon and sends them out, two by two, to the towns and villages he will soon visit. When they get to the town, he tells them exactly what he wants them to do.



There are lots of people. Who is the very specific person you’re looking for? Who has been prepared in advance who isn’t already a committed disciple of Jesus? Well, as they enter into the mission field, he tells them to say to a person they are visiting in this new town, “Peace to this house!” Maybe the person invites you in, receiving the blessing. Go in with them. If they don’t receive it, move on.

What is Jesus doing here? Well it's a LITMUS test. Jesus has given the 72 a simple phrase to throw out there to see if someone might be open to them. If not...it's ok. Move on. For you, in the missional context God has placed you, what might be a good litmus test phrase or question? Is there something whimsical and engaging that reveals the spiritual openness or closed-ness of people where you live, work and play?



We have found that using a simple greeting or question is the most effective way to do it, and Jesus is doing the same thing. Jesus has taken a common Jewish greeting, tweaked it, and infused it with spiritual meaning.

How often do we see someone or meet someone new and say, "Hi! How are you?" We aren't actually asking the question or expecting an answer, but we ask it because it's a cultural norm. We have discovered that giving an unexpected and whimsical answer is a really good litmus test. We've used different phrases or responses in the different places we've been. Remember, every context is different.

Here are a few helpful phrases we've used when asked, "How are you doing?"

- Great! Really curious to see what God is up to today.
- Pretty good. I've been praying for something, and I want to see how that plays out today.
- Good! I feel like God said something this morning that was pretty important and it was good for me to hear that.

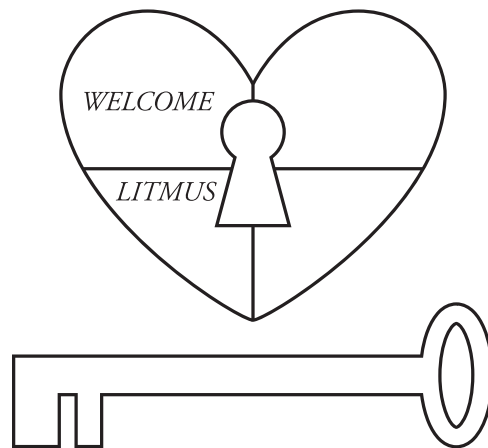
What we are trying to do with this litmus test is to get around all of the "Christianese" phrases that people often roll their eyes at and are sick of hearing. Rather, we want

to get to the heart of things. God is moving, working and speaking. We see that as normal. It's been normal today. For people who might be open, they will want to engage with that idea on a deeper level. Often, they might ask a follow up question and a conversation could begin.

WELCOME



Just because they receive this doesn't mean they are the person we are looking for. So we keep going. Jesus says this person will WELCOME you into their home. Today, it could still be their home, but it could also be where they regularly hang out, work out or simply have fun.

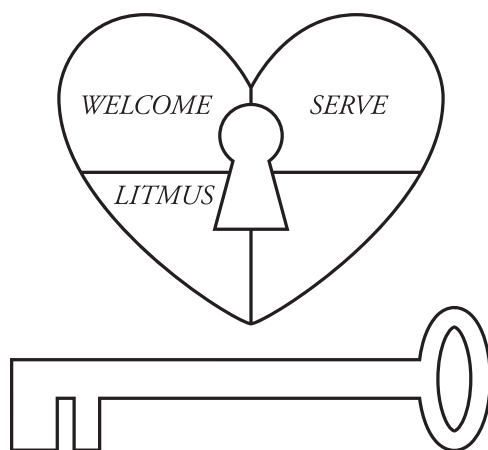


There are places that are special to them and people that are special to them, and they want to introduce you to those people and places. Whether it is a home or not isn't important. It's that they are welcoming you into something that *feels like home to them*.

SERVE



Furthermore, they don't just welcome you, they *SERVE* you. They want to help you with what you're passionate about. They want to see you succeed and flourish. And Jesus says this: "Let them!"

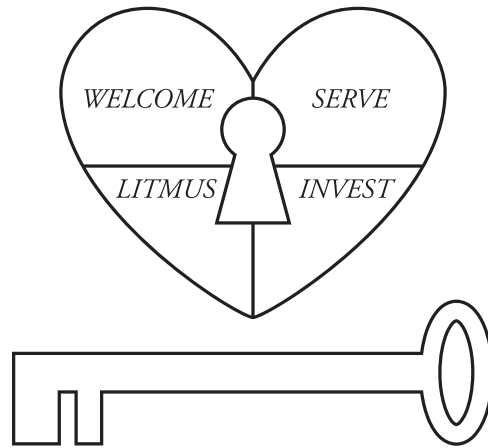


Let them help! Let them serve. You see, they are participating in what God is doing in you; they just don't know it yet. Often, because we have a heart to see people come to faith in Jesus, we've assumed that servant evangelism means that we are always the ones that are serving. Of course, we aren't suggesting that we shouldn't serve them. (We will get to that in a moment.) Rather, that when people want to serve us and are initiating that, we honor them and their value when we let them.

INVEST



When a person welcomed the disciples in and served them, Jesus instructed them not to go from house to house. When someone welcomes us in and serves us, Jesus tells us to stick with this person. Even if we get offers to better houses with better food! Jesus wants us to *INVEST* in them because not only are they beloved children of God, but we don't know the kind of Kingdom return this person will bring. We can't see that yet.



So stay with them and give them your best. What are the spiritual gifts you've been given? Use them heartily with this person. Are their skill sets that you have at your disposal that could help them in any way? Utilize them.

Jesus tells a story about three servants who are each entrusted with varying levels of gold, and the Master tells them he's expecting a return on his investment. The expectation is that, regardless of the size of talents they have, they must invest them. Seek a return. The same is true for us with the Person of Peace. All that God has given you: spiritual gifts, skills and experiences, wisdom and know-how, relationships, finances and all sorts of things...Leverage them for the good of this person.

THE PERSON OF PEACE



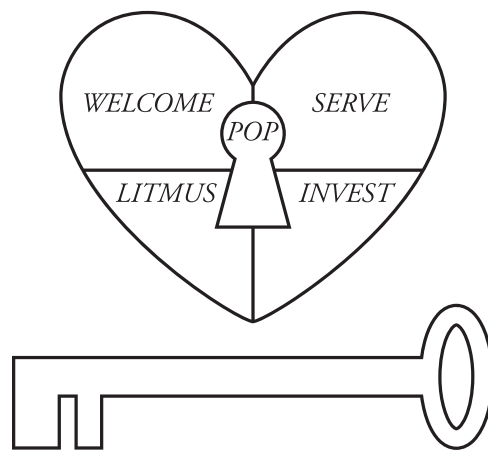
The person we are looking for is someone we call a Person of Peace and as we've already talked about, he or she can serve as a gatekeeper to a larger community that might bear Gospel fruit. For Jesus, this person would unlock the Kingdom potential in the town or village he was about to visit. For us, it's no different. This person will want everyone they care about and know to spend time with you. They will open their relational networks to you. (see *fig. 5.1 on next page*)

Put simply, when thinking about a Person of Peace, we are asking ourselves: "Who are you called to intentionally love who isn't a committed disciple yet?" Often, a Person

of Peace is someone you like to be with, and they like you. In other words, you'll enjoy being around them! It's not always going to appear super spiritual. In vs 16, Jesus says, "The one who hears you, hears me." The very fact that they are open to you means they might be open to Jesus.

Person of Peace

- Who are you called to intentionally love who isn't a committed disciple yet?
 - Most often, you will like them and they will like you.
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(fig 5.1)

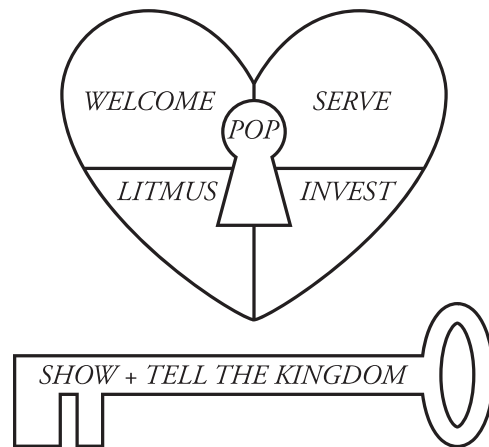
UNLOCKING THE DOOR



So how is the heart of the Person of Peace unlocked to the Gospel? And how about the hearts of all the people they know? After all, we started with Jesus saying there was a plentiful harvest.

Well, the KEY is the proclamation and the demonstration of the Kingdom of God. In vs 9, Jesus says, "Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'" You SHOW the Kingdom, and you TELL the Kingdom. It doesn't necessarily have to go in that order, but often when people experience the Kingdom, they are much more open to hearing about it. Practically speaking, we've

found 4 questions that Alex Absalom introduced to us to be helpful in engaging with **SHOWING** and **TELLING**.



- Can I pray for you?
- Can I serve you?
- Can I share my story with you?
- Can I share God's story?

With a Person of Peace whom God has prepared in advance, sometimes quickly and sometimes over a period of time, their hearts are unlocked and our good Father welcomes them home. Sometimes, because he or she is a gatekeeper to relationships, their friends and family come home as well.

But before we move on, let's think: how much of our time and energy are spent on rocky soil, hard soil or soil with thorns? What if, instead, we took Jesus at his word? What if we intentionally looked for this person he has prepared and we found access to fertile, good soil ... soil that God could use to produce a massive harvest for the Kingdom?

WHAT ABOUT JESUS?



So here's the question: Did Jesus really do this himself?

Well, let's explore that. In John 4, Jesus finds himself in a Samaritan town called Sychar. He's sitting at the town well and has a conversation with a woman from the town and flips her life upside down.

She serves him. She's open to him. He proclaims the good news of the Kingdom. He has a supernatural conversation with her because he's sharing things with her that he couldn't possibly know. In other words, he's doing exactly what he's instructed the 12 and then the 72 to do.

So what happens next?

John 4:27-30 says,

“Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, ‘What do you seek?’ or ‘Why are you talking with her?’ So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?’ They went out of the town and were coming to him.”

Did you catch that?

This woman opens up her network of relationships to Jesus. The people from the town leave where they are to come out to where Jesus is. She's a gatekeeper to good soil.

But of course, the best is yet to come. Look at John 4:39:

“Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, ‘It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.’”

This woman had been prepared in advance. She was incredibly good soil, and many from that town come to faith in Jesus. She was a gatekeeper to a plentiful harvest.

When Jesus gave instructions to his disciples and to the 72, he wasn't asking them to do anything he wasn't already doing himself. Jesus is the best evangelist who ever lived. He knows what he is talking about!

BEYOND JESUS



Now, let's push it a little further.

Look at Jesus' last words to his disciples in the Great Commission: "Go and make disciples, teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you."

Everything.

Is it surprising that as the early church starts and then spreads, we see the same instructions being carried out? That people would take Jesus at his word and do what he commanded?

Let's jump ahead to Acts 10.

In a vision, Peter is asked to visit a Roman centurion named Cornelius, who had been visited by an angel and told to get Peter. My guess is this was an experience that opened him up to the Gospel! Peter has a vision of his own and is sent to Cornelius' house.

A wide-open opportunity is in front of him. He might have good soil. He's got someone who seems prepared in advance. Cornelius is open. He's even invited all of his relatives and close friends. There might be a harvest.

What happens? Acts 10:44-48:

"While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing

them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, 'Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?' And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days."

It sounds really familiar, doesn't it?

Let's look at two other examples, both in Acts 16.

Paul has just arrived in Europe, a place where the Gospel doesn't have a foothold yet, but of course God has already been at work. He reaches the shores of Greece and is now in the city of Philippi. Here's what Luke says in Acts 16:13:

"And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.' And she prevailed upon us."

Again...it's the same thing! It almost seems too easy for Paul here. This person is open, not because of anything Paul does, but because, "the Lord opened her heart to pay attention." But that's what Paul is looking for.

She comes to faith, and then many of her network of relationships come to faith: Her whole household. And where does Paul stay? In her house, just like Jesus instructed.

One last example:

Paul and Silas are still in Philippi but now, are in prison. They've been singing and praying when a violent earthquake loosens their chains, opens the doors and the jailer freaks out because he thinks all the prisoners have escaped. He's about to kill himself, but Paul calls out to stop him and tells him everyone is still there.

Acts 16:30:

“Then he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ And they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.”

Maybe, just maybe, Jesus really was being serious!

This process is how he did it. The 12 disciples did it. The 72 did it. The early church exploded and multiplied doing it as they followed the prompting and leading of the Holy Spirit. And today, it is the fundamental strategy of missionaries who are working overseas. They use it in every country and context, and the same things happen.

It’s this simple: With the Holy Spirit inside of you as your guide and with Jesus’ instructions on finding the Person of Peace, look for people God has already prepared. Look for good soil.

After all...There’s always a harvest.

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR AND FURTHER READING



Much of the thinking behind the process we have laid out here for finding Persons of Peace is not original. As we tried to show in this chapter, people have been using the strategy that Jesus used for literally thousands of years. That gives us great confidence! It means that we are simply learning from the work of disciples of Jesus who have gone before us.

If you are interested in further reading on this subject, we recommend the following resources:

- Seminary professor and pastor Dr. Thom Wolf is widely considered the most recent person to uncover the simple strategies we have laid out here. Although he has not written a book on this topic, some of his work can be found in various e-books on missionary movements, as well in the books of missional thinkers such as Alan Hirsch, Michael Frost, Neil Cole and Mike Breen.
- “Evangelism Strategies” by Bob and Mary Hopkins
- “The Viral Gospel: How Finding Your Person of Peace Accelerates Your Mission” by Alex Absalom

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