

August 24/25, 2024

## **Ministry Launch 2024-2025: Grow + Multiply**

*State of the Church, 2024*

Pastor Ryan Harmon

Well, if you're visiting with us this morning, or even if you've joined us over the past year, I just want to give you a warning that this morning is going to feel a little different than our normal weekend services. Those will resume next week. But we always find that during the month of August, when the ministry year is kind of kicking off, when everyone is going back to school, we find it's a good thing for us to just pause and consider where we are as a church, and also to talk together about what we feel God is calling us into, where He's taking us in this year to come. So, that's what we're going to do this morning.

If you walked in and you grabbed an *Atlas* booklet, we'll reference that a little bit later this morning. But as we begin, I want to encourage you to just take a moment and consider where God has you right now. What is He calling you to over the course of this coming year? As we talk together, as a church, about where we feel He's calling us as a church, I want you to prayerfully consider what He might be asking of you as we set out on this ministry year.

There's no question that we're doing ministry. Ministry is happening in the midst of an interesting world. I think we can agree our world is interesting these days, can't we? It's interesting in Lincoln, interesting days in the state, interesting days in the country, interesting days for the local church. I use that word interesting with great intentionality. I think it's very tempting, in this moment, to use words like scary or depressing or maybe even unprecedented, right? For the past four years, everything has been unprecedented, and I want to encourage us, as followers of Jesus, to embrace the word *interesting*. These are interesting days. They're interesting days because we follow the God who is the God of history. We follow a Savior who currently sits on the throne, and He's overseeing history. Nothing escapes His notice, and He will accomplish His purposes. He uses good things and He uses bad things to bring about His purposes in the final days. That's who we follow. That allows us to walk through these days, that are certainly complex, with a posture and attitude of curious confidence, knowing that we serve a God that is not absent, He is working more than we could ever know. These are interesting days.

Specifically, for the church, these are interesting days. They're interesting for every local church, because there's no question the ground has shifted. The landscape has changed within which all of us are working and living and following after Jesus. Assumptions that were once quite safe, just things you could count on, are no longer safe. So that means that every church is having to figure out, "What does it look like to pursue what God is calling churches to with a renewed vigor and a renewed courage?" There has to be new ways of thinking, but those new ways of thinking have to abide by the grounded biblical principles of the way God has chosen to work over the course of history. His church has been growing for 2,000 years.

As we've considered that, our leadership team has really kind of honed in on two words that we think are quite powerful, but they're also incredibly simple. We believe that in this coming year,

God is calling us to focus in on growing and multiplying...**Growing + Multiplying**. I'll come back to that in just a few moments. I say these are interesting days for the church. Some of that is because of what's happening in our culture at large, and what's happening in terms of people attending church and what they think of church. Last year, a study came out that showed that over the past 25 years—so take that back to the year 2000, more or less—40 million people who once attended church regularly have chosen to leave the church, have chosen to stop attending church. These aren't people who passed away or something like that. These are people that actively chose, "We once went, but now we are not going to go any longer." 40 million people! Now, if there's any word or any circumstance that deserves the word *unprecedented*, that is *unprecedented*. That's never happened in the history of the American church.

Now, there are a number of reasons for that. No doubt every story is unique. There's a number of theories on why that's happened, and certainly, for some people, it's because of harm that's come from the church, or because of different things that have bothered them. There's certainly a number of reasons, but I have wondered, as I've thought about this, whether there is an underlying reality, an underlying reason, that ultimately drives people to make that decision. I've wondered whether, at the end of the day, there are a number of people that just came to the point where they felt stagnant in their life with God. They just felt stuck, like they're on a treadmill, running hard but going nowhere, not making any progress, and just wondering, "What is this all about in the end?" And feeling stuck is an incredibly depressing feeling. I wonder whether there's anyone that maybe feels stuck right now? Have you ever felt stuck in your faith? I've felt stuck, and as I look back at my life, I can see how God used that to really bring me to a decisive moment in my life with Him.

About 25 years ago, actually—just consequently or coincidentally—it was around the same time this trend started happening in the American church. But it was right as I was about 20 or 21 years old that I found myself asking a question that I couldn't quite find a satisfactory answer to. And the question was, "After you become a Christian, after you give your life to Jesus, what happens next...what happens next? What's the Christian life about on a Sunday, or on a Monday, or on a Tuesday?" And as I found myself wrestling with that question, I couldn't quite find a satisfying answer.

I wonder if you'll humor me for just a moment. Let me kind of tell you a bit of my story that led me to that moment. Now I do so with a little trepidation, because I resonated last week with a young woman—Lauren's story—that sometimes she felt a little embarrassed about her story because it wasn't very dramatic. She hasn't loved her story. And I can resonate with that, because when I think of my story, I just think it's kind of boring, and that's not a great thing to tell you right before I'm going to tell you my story. (*laughter*) I just ask you to stick with me for a moment.

If I'm going to tell my story, I have to start actually before I was even born, even though I'm the first or the only member of my family, currently, that's a pastor. My great grandfather was a pastor, and years ago he started a church in Omaha. He also started this Bible conference I've mentioned before, and Bryan went to it this year as well. It's up in northwest Iowa, and for ninety years this Bible conference has been going on. That's my great grandpa. He started a church and, in time, my mom and dad came together. They met each other in that church; they got married, and that, then, became two large kind of foundational families in that church that had been there since the beginning. So when they got married, the family kind of grew, and what that meant was that, as I

grew up and went to that church, every single person in my family went to that church: every aunt, every uncle, both sets of grandparents, every cousin. And not only did they attend that church, which made Sunday morning feel a little bit like a family reunion, they also were all committed followers of Jesus. And that meant, from an early age, I knew there was nothing more important than to give my life to Jesus. That was absolutely very clear. Everyone around me was doing it, all the people I loved, all the people I cherished. So that made it—almost just expected that—at the age of 5, I accepted Jesus Christ into my life. I was at something called a Backyard Bible Club. I don't know if you've ever heard of that, but it's a little bit like a VBS, but it's in your backyard. There's no disco ball, and the dancing is a little more awkward, (*laughter*) but in that backyard Bible club, in my own basement, in a moment led by my mom who presented the truth of the gospel, I raised my hand, along with four other kids who raised their hands to accept Jesus Christ into our heart. That's the way we talked about it at that time. Then we went back into a back bedroom in my basement, and my Aunt Linda led us in prayer and, at that moment I was saved, at five years old.

Now, our team here does such a great job when they do baptism stories. They do such a great job of kind of doing a bit of a “before” and an “after”. You know, what changed “after” you gave your life to Jesus. And I'll be honest, I think when you accept Jesus at a really young age, that's kind of a hard question. I was five years old and I've got to be honest. I don't know exactly if it was on a Wednesday, I don't know what Thursday looked like. I don't think I shared my toys better. (*laughter*) I don't think I ate my peas without complaining. I don't think those kinds of things changed. But I know that God changed my life that day. We know from Scripture that He absolutely transformed my life in that moment, that I went from being dead to being alive to Him. He regenerated my heart, made me alive. I know that, in that moment, I was forgiven for my sin, a debt I could never pay on my own, and on the cross, Jesus paid it all. And so my sin, as I reached out in faith, by His grace, He has forgiven me, all my sins: past, present, future. My eternal future is absolutely secure because of that moment. I know that, in that moment, God gave me His very Spirit. His Spirit filled me to lead me in life. I know that all of those things happened in that moment, an absolutely critical moment in my life, the most important day in my life. But I think we can be honest. It's kind of a boring story. It's okay. In time, I've come to just cherish my story. It's my story. I know that God did something in that moment, and I'm so thankful for it. But I think it's also important to remember that just because someone is saved when they are young, that doesn't mean that life is free of struggle. It doesn't mean that life is free of conflict. If you were saved at a young age, brought up in a family of faith, you probably know what I'm talking about. The struggles of life, conflicts in life, they still come. And for me, that came in the form of this question, in time, that I began to ask myself, “What is the Christian life all about after you're saved? What comes next?”

I went through high school, and it was pretty clear during my high school years, that it's so important to walk with God in high school. And for me that meant not partying, not drinking, not participating in those things, and that was a really important thing. That was a way that I felt I would live out my faith. But then something happened. I went to a Christian college where no one did that. You're surrounded by people all like you. If anyone is partying, they're kind of doing it in the corner. They might have to get kicked out of school or something if they get caught. That was just the context. And so that wasn't a differentiator, and you started to wonder, “What exactly is this all about?” And in time, that question started to be one that just wouldn't go away. What is

the Christian life all about? The more I wrestled with that question, the more I was dissatisfied with my answers. And in time, I think I kind of accepted that this was the narrative of the Christian life. The narrative that I embraced at this time was, “You’re saved; you’re forgiven, and you are eternally grateful for that, absolutely.” By grace alone”, so I knew I couldn’t earn my way to heaven. That was abundantly clear. But then the question is, “What comes next?” And for me, the answer to that question was, “Just try to manage your sin. Just try to keep things tucked in so that you can kind of get through life, and when you die, it’ll all get better.” I think that’s kind of the narrative I embraced. “Accept Christ, hold on tight, and just know that it’ll get better in heaven.”

I embraced that life for a while, embraced that mentality for a while, but I will be honest with you and just say that, in time, that started to really lead me to a place of apathy, even depression. And what started to happen for me was I’d look at Scripture; I’d look at what I see promised in Scripture, and I’d say, “That is not my experience.” For example, in Matthew 11, Jesus comes, and He says, “**Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**” And I remember thinking, “I want rest. I’m so weary.” He says, “**Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.**” And I remember reading those words and thinking: “Jesus, I long for that. But the yoke I’m carrying, the Christian life just seems so burdensome, so heavy. I long to live in that easy yoke.” The other verse that I just had to wrestle with—I sometimes describe myself as being haunted by this verse because it was a little bit like I couldn’t get it out of my head—was John 10:10. Maybe you know it. Jesus says, “**The thief comes only to kill and steal and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.**” Abundant life...life to the full! Literally, we could translate that word *super abundant*. It doesn’t get any more abundant, overflowing with abundance. And I was thinking to myself, “That is not my experience I’m just wrestling with,” and “I want to know what the abundant life is.” And that set me on a course of deep probing, deep study to understand Jesus, and “What is the abundant life?”

And in time, He came to show me that here is what the abundant life is. The abundant life is His very life being manifest in me, being made alive in me. Jesus lived the most abundant life anyone who has ever walked the earth has lived. No one has lived in more fullness, more joy than Jesus Christ. It’s exactly what God is making available to humanity, what God intended for humanity. That is what Jesus lived. What I came to understand is, it’s not about me carrying things forward. It’s about me surrendering and letting His life be what starts to live more and more in and through me. Paul describes it this way. He says, “**I’ve been crucified with Christ. It’s no longer I who live but Christ, who lives in me.**” It has helped me understand that the life of fullness, the life of abundance is a life that is increasingly surrendered to Jesus, and that is a life that is increasingly becoming more and more like Him. Paul says, “**We’re conformed to the image of Christ.**” It’s a life marked by pursuit of Him that results in transformation, actually being changed into a different kind of person...where His life is now living through us. And because of that, we’re not trying to grab abundance on our own. We’re living in the abundance that His life offers. That moment changed my life. I know that my life was ultimately changed when I was five years old, but I will be honest and say a close second was this moment where I came to realize that what God intends, after we place our faith in Jesus, is that we are on a progressive path of growth into Christ-likeness. We are becoming more like Him. All of this is brought about by His Spirit. As we surrender to Him, we look more and more like Jesus. It is an adventure of a lifetime. It never ends. We seek after Him, and we grow and we multiply.

That moment changed my life, and so you can imagine how excited I was in 2006 when I stepped foot in this place. Not in this building, I think this was just a field at this time, or a grassy hill or something. But over in the “C” wing, in the chapel, I came into Lincoln Berean Church, and I discovered the *mission statement* of Lincoln Berean church. My heart resonated with it, because it’s exactly what I longed to see happen in my life. And I thought, “Here is a place that I can call my church home. Here’s a place where I can dig in, because their passion is to help me become more like Jesus.” The mission statement of Lincoln Berean Church is one you’ve heard a lot, and you’re going to continue to hear it, because it is core to what we do. We say that our mission is:

***“To glorify God by seeking to present every person complete in Christ,”***

...every person complete in Christ. I want to talk about three parts of that statement briefly. First thing, we just have to acknowledge is that it’s not anything that Lincoln Berean made up, but it comes straight from the pages of Scripture. Paul says in Colossians 1 that **“He admonishes and teaches every man, every person, seeking to present every person complete in Christ.”** And what’s first and fundamental in that mission statement is that our motivation is *God’s glory*. That is the thing that drives us. We want to bring God glory. We want to make His name known. We want to see His reputation grow all over the world. We want to glorify Him. That is what motivates us. With that motivation, here is what we do. We seek to present *every person*. Every person is so important in a day that is becoming more and more polarized, a day where groups and niches kind of gather and they don’t interact. We want to acknowledge that, as the church, we are called to present *every person* the gospel. It is the longing of every heart...every single person, whether they know it or not, is longing to be connected to their Creator, and to step into the fullness of life that is available with Jesus. And so we, as a people, say yes in Lincoln, yes in Nebraska, but also around the world. We’ve been doing work for years in South Asia. We have connections in Mexico. We believe that every person, every neighbor, that this is the longing of their heart. So we seek to present every person *complete in Christ*. That is maturity. That is looking more and more like Jesus, until that final day that we know is coming in the future, when the Lord will come and He will finish the work He has begun in us. This moment of full completeness will arrive. But until that day, we are on a path—a progressive path with Him—of becoming more and more like Jesus. We are growing, and then we are seeking to help others do the same.

That’s actually the way we expressed it in our *vision statement*, which we brought out about five years ago. Our vision statement is simply just kind of an acknowledgement of, “This is what it would look like if we were actually accomplishing our mission:”

**Coming together to know Jesus, become more like Him, and help others do the same.**

So, first, we are gathering under Christ, to know Jesus. That is, we want to know Him intimately. We want to have an interactive relationship with Him. We don’t just want head knowledge. We want relational experience with Jesus Christ, the living Lord of all things, to know Him, and become more like Him. That is, we will grow and then help others do the same. We will multiply. So, we believe God will bring that about in us if we are seeking to accomplish that mission that He has given us. The mission of God for His church is to help people come to know Jesus and then grow up in Him. The scope is that every person would know. It requires that the church be a people who are multiplying, who are constantly looking out, wondering, “Who else might God bring into the life that is truly life?” That’s what we long to see happen as a church. It’s what we long to see happen as a staff.

But I do want to ask this question, as you think about that, as you look at the year ahead. “Is that your heart’s longing?” Do you look ahead to August of 2025, and say, “Ah, Lord, if I could grow, if I could multiply, there could be new people sitting next to me.” It could be the most satisfying thing in the world. Is that what your heart longs for?

I want to do something a little strange; perhaps you’ll think it’s strange. I’m going to ask you to close your eyes. I just want you to imagine for a moment, that a year from now, this is the way you, yourself, would describe the life that you’ve lived over this past year.

*For the first time, or maybe just for the first time in a long time, this last year has been marked by making space for Jesus to work in you the way that He longs to, the way He intends to, the way He promises to, if you will surrender to Him. Some days look different than others. Life is not without challenges, and there are still highs and there are still lows, just as before. But when you look back at where you’ve been, or ask others what they see changing in you, the answers are encouraging. You’re surrounded by a community of people that have similar things to say about their own lives. Looking now at how God has changed you, you can confidently say you are increasingly relying on Jesus, and your relationship with Him is the most vital part of your identity. Not only that, but you experience His power and His peace at work in your life. Even when you suffer for His name, you do it joyfully. Your circumstances don’t impact your perseverance. God has brought more mature believers into your life, and you have learned from their examples, as they have sought to follow Jesus. You love God’s Word more and more, and you find yourself turning every aspect of your life to Jesus in prayer. You rest in His forgiveness, and you’re finding forgiving others to be easier and easier because of your confidence in God. Finally, you’re helping others approach Jesus the same way, to embrace the good news of the gospel, and to live a different kind of life. This is your life. This is what it looks like to grow and multiply, and you are deeply satisfied.*

Wouldn’t that be amazing? Is that what you long for? I’ll be honest. As I hear that, I long for that. I long to grow in that way...that statements like those would be true of my life. I think sometimes about spiritual growth, and it makes me think about my children and how eager they are every year to measure themselves against the door in our kitchen. They just want to know, “Did I grow?” And we long, as people, to grow. We long to become more like Jesus, to be set on a path where we are changing. And God intends that we do that. We’re not made to be stuck. God intends that we grow, and as we grow, we’ll become more and more like Jesus and that His very passions will start to consume our heart, and we will long to see a lost world come to know Him. We will *multiply*.

It’s what we long to do over this coming year. It’s going to be our laser focus as a staff and as a church, but I have to be honest. If I’m going to say that it’s our laser focus as a church, then I have to also say it has to be all of us. I want to ask you, “Is that what you long for?” If it is, we want to help. We want to do everything we can to see God bring that about in us as a body, as we believe He absolutely will, because it’s what He longs to see in us, and He is faithful. The question we have to ask ourself is, “Are we willing to surrender ourself before Him, to submit ourselves to Him and say, ‘Lord, show me how you would like me to grow?’” That’s our vision. That’s our vision for the year, our focus for the year. It’s really the “why?”, the motivating “why?” behind what we do. And it’s important that I name that, because I’m going to get into a few details, a few “how?”

things. But the “how?” things are intended to be taken up because you long to see growth and multiplication in your life.

We have a few things we would like to help with. If you didn’t grab an Atlas booklet when you came in, I would encourage you, as you leave, “Grab an Atlas.” This is kind of a road map for this year. It highlights everything I’ve been talking about and more. It also talks about some things that we think are foundational, absolutely fundamental, as we seek to be a church that helps every person grow and multiply. The first thing I want to highlight here, as we kind of walk through some of the steps that we’re taking as a church to help each person step into that, we’re calling our *Primary Discipleship Environments*. Matt already used that phrase as he was talking about Life Groups. The first one we’re kind of doing right now. This is something that we do when we gather. This is an example of a primary discipleship environment. We’re calling every person to gather in on our weekend worship services, where we submit to God’s Word. We learn together. We worship together...embodied worship...listening to other believers lift up praises to glorify God. Matt also mentioned that we’re going to be going through Ephesians, and we are excited about that. Ephesians is going to be the study that we’re going to pick up in two weeks. I can’t wait to walk through that study together. We are going to continue to be a church that says we are going to walk verse by verse through God’s Word, because that is where the good stuff is. The authority that changes life is found in God’s Word. Ephesians is a study that really is going to highlight for us the salvation that is available to us in and through Jesus Christ, through His life. But it also is a salvation that calls us into a different kind of life. There’s a whole different way of living that is available to us because of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus. I can’t wait to study that together. We’re going to start that in two weeks.

The other *Primary Discipleship Environment* that we have is Life Groups. Matt already talked about Life Groups, but we just know it is absolutely critical that we, as believers, gather together, but then also gather in smaller, more intimate communities. It’s important that we take God’s Word and we don’t just study it, but we also think, “How does this apply?” And one of the great things about being in a Life Group is you could have someone that says, “Hey, I know they said this during the weekend. We know that’s true, but I was thinking about your job. I was thinking about your family situation. How does that apply specifically for you?” It’s so critical that we have people in our lives that help us do that. Life Groups are just that, this primary discipleship context environment where we can learn and serve together with others. If you have not joined a Life Group, we would encourage you to do that today. Matt already said they’re out there at the spotlight booth.

These are the two environments that we are calling everyone in this body to be a part of. These are environments that we think are so foundational that we really replicate them with our next generation, and it’s important for me to highlight that. It’s not just adults that we’re calling to with these two environments. We do the same thing with our kids and with our youth and with our college students. We have such an amazing Next Gen Team. If your kids are not involved, if you, yourself, as a college student, or as a high school student, middle school student, aren’t involved, I would encourage you to be involved, because in those environments, in those large environments, they speak God’s truth. They talk about real issues from a standpoint of God’s Word, and they gather in small groups. They gather in Life Groups to figure out, “What does that look like in my life?” Our Next Gen Team is so intense, so focused on laying a foundation, helping our kids, our

students, our college students, lay a foundation that is going to pay dividends all throughout their lives. We're so thankful for them.

Now we know that, in this pursuit of Jesus, we know that these environments are important, but we also acknowledge that each one of us, as we're walking through life, we run into little obstacles. We run into struggles that we have that are particular to us. And so we, as a church, have a number of things that we are just calling *Discipleship Resources* to help you with those specific areas. Spiritual Care and Celebrate Recovery are incredible resources. Pure Desire is an incredible resource. We want to encourage you, as you leave, to make sure you grab not only the *Atlas*, but the *Fall Supplement*. There's going to be a supplement that comes out every fall, every winter, every spring and summer, telling you all the resources that are available. Then, as you pray and talk with Jesus about what He is calling you into, you can then go and look through the resources, and you could say, "I think this would be a good step for me." These resources are critical, and I want for all of you—everyone, our Life Groups—to understand they can take advantage of these resources.

But there is one particular resource I do want to highlight here as we finish up. It's one that we're excited about. It's one that we've had in the past, but we're kind of relaunching it. It's kind of a refreshed expression of what we've done in the past. They're called our *Core Classes*. If you look at studies and statistics, it's very clear that even in the church, just a good biblical understanding is something that is decreasing all the time. Very basic things that are true in Scripture, we're finding that more and more in churches across America, these things are kind of taken for granted, and very basic theological concepts are things that we can't assume anymore, that the people in a church necessarily believe these things. So, because of that, we just know, as a staff, we have to step into that. And so our Core Classes are an attempt to do just that.

I want to talk about these four classes. The first one is called **Basics**. It's just an attempt to look at God's big story, what God is doing in the world, but then also at your story, and figure out how those things overlap. What is God doing in the world? What is He doing in your own life? If you are new to faith in Jesus, or if you've been struggling with feeling stale or stagnant, this could be a great place to begin. If you got baptized last week, and this is all brand new, we'd encourage you to consider this Basics class. The second class we're calling **Grow Bible**. It's just a study of God's Word, how to read His Word, how to approach it, how to dig into it. We believe that God's Word is where authority for life exists. There's no other place. And so just like the Foundations class was years ago, this class is an attempt to really ground people and equip them to study God's Word for themselves. If that's something you've never done before, if that's something you're curious about how to do, we'd encourage you to consider that class. Next is **Grow Theology**. Just like what I already mentioned, there are some big truths that are just so critical that we know. I've heard a professor say once to me, "Ryan, good theology is preventative medicine." Sometimes we believe lies about God, and that causes us to run down paths that are just so unhealthy for us. Getting grounded in what is absolutely true is so fundamental to our walk with Jesus. So, if that's something that you are curious about, we'd encourage you to consider that class. I also would say that if that word theology is one that makes you kind of say, "That sounds horrible." If that's you, just think of it this way. We just want to come together and think about who God is, and think about what He's like. We want to consider Him. That's all theology is. The last class is what we're calling **Grow and Multiply**. It's a class that looks at transformation. How does God change lives?

And when we say grow and multiply, it's because a fundamental truth is that as we grow, and as we become more like Jesus, we will multiply. We will look out at our world, and we will see those who are lost. We'll have a heart and a passion to meet them, to know them, and to help them come to know the truth of the gospel. So, we want to equip you to do just that, and help you think about how to do that. Transformation—how God changes lives—not so that we can look in the mirror and say, “Look how great I am,” but that we might tell others about how great God is.

We're excited about these classes. They're going to begin in two weeks, and they're going to be something that we roll out every single semester. So, you know there's a cap on how many people can fit into a classroom, but we want you just to consider what God is calling you to this fall and ask maybe, “Would one of those be a good thing for you?” If you've been there and you've kind of studied those things before, then we would encourage you to find a place to serve, find a place to dig in. God is calling each of us to a life of growth in Him. It's what we long for as a church. We actually believe the way that God wants to change the world is through the growth of His people, who then will multiply. That is His strategy. And we, as a church, want to embrace His strategy. So I ask you: “Do you feel stuck?” “Are you longing to grow?” “Do you have a vision for your life?” “Is there a place that you want to see God bring you to a year from now?” “Does your heart just long to see the fullness and the joy that Jesus lived with, to see that be something that is a mark of your life, a characteristic of your very life?” “Do you long to step into the abundance that is available in Him?” If that is you, we want to invite you to join us. We invite you to join us on this journey of growth and multiplication as we seek to pursue Him, to surrender to Him, that His life might live through us, and that it might change our world as we multiply for His sake, for His name, motivated by His glory. Let's pray together.

*Our Father, we do come to You, acknowledging the life that is available to us is the life that our heart, our deepest longing, desires. Lord, we're so easily distracted. We're so easily, kind of prone to settle for so much less. Lord, don't let us do it. By Your Spirit, will You stir up in us a vision for the incredible, abundant, full life that is available through You, to us, through Your Son as we follow after Him. Will You empower us, by Your Spirit, to be on a path of growth in Christlikeness? Will You give us eyes to see a hurting world, that we might share the Good News of Jesus with others, and will You stir up in us a motivation that is grounded in bringing You glory and making Your name known so that every knee may bow, so that every tongue may confess that Jesus is Lord in that final day. Lord, that is what we long to see. We ask that You would do it. We lift these things up to You in the name of Your Son. Amen.*

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