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CHAPTER 1

EVERYDAY MISSIONARY

In the beginning God . . . The first words of Scripture supply for us the ultimate foundation for missions. The heartbeat of God is that He would be worshiped among all people. The writer of the Psalms conveys this sentiment when he said of God, “I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”¹ From the beginning of time in the garden, God’s desire was to have a relationship with creation and for creation to see God for who He is: their Creator. As a result of the fall and sin’s entrance into the world, however, humankind was inclined toward self-worship and not God-centered exaltation. Because humans’ self-inclination does not square with God’s righteous jealousy for His name, God is on a mission for God.² According to one popular writer, “Missions exists because worship does not.”³ God desires that all people worship Him and give Him the glory that is due His name.

Therefore, the mission of God requires that believers leverage their lives for His glory. The Great Commission is not for a select few; it is for the entirety of the church. The movement of God’s mission sweeps across everyday, ordinary lives to draw in businesspeople, soccer moms, grandmothers, neighbors, students, lawyers, teachers, baristas, contractors, white collar, blue collar, or no collar

at all. Regular people like you and me united by the one who lifts the curse of the fall. Filled with His spirit, laying down our lives, denying

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ourselves for the mission of God and the good of others. This is the invitation.

Welcome to the movement of life on mission. Through His church, this is God's plan to change the world.

Many people believe that mission and ministry are carried out by a select few professional clergy or an elite number of mission agencies and nonprofit organizations. But here's the reality: God's mission was given to every member of His church. We are called to be everyday missionaries. Everyday missionaries are those who practice life on mission where God has placed them, whether that be at an office complex, a developing country, or a college campus. It is incumbent on every believer to have an "all hands on deck" mentality in order for the mission to reach its fullest potential. Ephesians 4 tells us that God has given leaders to the church in order to build up His people until they "become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13 NIV). Notice it does not say that our leaders were

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placed over us to do all the work. When we choose to join God on His mission through His church, we dare to be the everyday missionaries we are called to be.

Your life has a mission. If you are a follower of Jesus, then He has a purpose and plan for you. But not only does God have a plan for you, Ephesians 3:20 tells us that

God is able "to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us" (NASB). He wants to do more in and through you than you can imagine. Think about that: The God of the universe has a plan far beyond what your mind can conceive. What exactly does that look like? What does that mean? How will it all play out in the coming weeks and in the next five years?

MORE THAN "ME"

The purpose of God's mission isn't really about us. We live in a culture that is all about "me." Social media has allowed us to usher in the "selfie"

generation—a generation, if we aren't careful, that defines itself by self-promotion. As we begin to understand what our lives on mission are about, it is vital to understand our goals. The ultimate goal is not that we would do good things for others. It's not even to start churches or share our faith. Yes, those are good aspects of the mission, but they are not the ultimate aim. The ultimate aim of our lives is to bring glory to God.

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If we look again at Ephesians 3:20, where we learn that God wants to do abundantly more through our lives than we can imagine, we must continue reading through verse 21, which explains the central purpose of any effort we give to God's mission. It says, "To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever" (ESV). One early church document tells us, "Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever."⁴ The goal is glory!

The purpose of your parenting is to glorify God. The purpose of your job is to give God glory. And the purpose of your life's mission: you guessed it, to glorify God. In 1 Corinthians 10:31 it says, "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for God's glory." You don't have to waste years wondering what your purpose is.

Life on mission is about intersecting gospel intentionality into our everyday routines.

Maybe you think, *Okay, I get it. Living for God's glory is the aim, and joining God in His mission to reach my community and beyond is a means toward that great intention, but I have no idea how I'm going to add mission to the already-consistent chaos called my life.*

I (Dustin) recently participated in a conference in Austin, Texas, where I heard teacher after teacher expound on how we cannot just look at mission as something to add to our schedules but something to intersect with our current daily rhythms. Life on mission is about

A weak gospel foundation leads to very fragile mission practices.

intersecting gospel intentionality into our everyday routines.

Adding something to the calendar can seem like an overwhelming task. God may call you to add elements, and if so, be obedient and add away. However, this book's objective is not to get you involved

in some new mission program or create another church event, but rather to walk alongside you in creating a gospel intentionality within your already-present everyday rhythms.

WHAT DRIVES THE MISSION?

Living life on mission should be driven not out of guilty obligation, but rather out of embracing the identity and purpose given to us in Christ. Often, though, we are confused about our ministry motive, as well as about how to actually act on the knowledge we have. When it comes to understanding God's Word and living out God's mission, many of us tend to fall into one of three camps.

1. The "I'm not a professional" camp

Sarah represents many of us in that she rarely—if ever—takes action. She thinks she can't be a part of God's mission to redeem the world because she's not a professional minister. She equates ministry with paid professionals. She doesn't realize that *every* Christian is called to make disciples—that a Christian is necessarily a missionary in everyday life—and that her life on mission matters more than she could ever dream.

2. The "I'm too busy pondering" camp

Chris is passionate about learning as much about God as he can. He feels that knowledge about God will be his secret to his future ministry success. He loves going to seminars, reading books, and studying theology. He loves to talk about spiritual things with other believers,

but his involvement in actual ministry is minimal. He goes to church, of course, but to say he is on mission with God would be a lie. He has no intentional relationships and hasn't had a conversation with a nonbeliever in months. Though he goes "deep" in theology, he has forgotten to apply any of it to his life.

3. The "Why are we doing this?" camp

Stan, however, is the opposite of Chris. Stan is eager and task oriented. He has gotten the idea from his church that he is supposed to be active in ministry, and he has become the epitome of active. He helps with every ministry his church does, and he dutifully has conversations about Jesus with whoever will listen. But the conversations are often awkward and forced because, in reality, Stan doesn't really know what to say—he just knows he's supposed to talk. None of his words come from a legitimate overflow of meditating on the gospel and applying it to his life. They are parroted lines that he's memorized over years of familiarity with all things "church."

Chris understood the biblical foundations for ministry, but they didn't make it to his life. Stan understood the process of being a missionary, but without the biblical foundations. Too often we see people either digging deep into doctrine but never applying it, or we see those who eagerly engage in missionary activity while never digging deep into why mission work even matters. A weak gospel foundation leads to very fragile mission practices.

You don't have to fall into any of these camps because there is an altogether different option. Understanding that your life on mission matters, along with both the biblical foundations and the missionary process, is necessary to becoming an empowered everyday missionary—and the goal for this book is to train you in all three areas. Sarah will learn that she doesn't have to be a "professional" for her life on mission to matter; Stan will develop biblical foundations; and Chris will learn the practical missionary process that results from a solid biblical foundation.

A SIMPLE PROCESS

Though the need is great, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can join God in His mission and see real change take place across North America. While mission can work itself out in many different ways, we want to offer a simple, clear process laid out in Scripture that effectively multiplies disciples and sends out everyday missionaries.

We recognize that mission and discipleship have been overly programmed and made excessively complicated, and we have no desire to do either of those. In the Scriptures, we do not see a syllabus for a program, but rather a gospel-rich missionary process.

We believe that this simple, reproducible approach, which is rooted in Jesus' example and the early church's ministry, will prove extremely effective as you follow Jesus in making disciples. The content is adaptable to any context and can function well as an individual study, but we strongly encourage walking through it with a small group of people. It is essential to interact with the content, which is threaded with powerful questions, to help you take your next steps.

We want to answer the *why*, *what*, *how*, *who*, and *what next* questions as you spend time working through *Life on Mission*.

- **WHY** does mission work even matter?
- **WHAT** is foundational to my growth and development?
- **HOW** do I apply the mission God has given me?
- To **WHOM** is God calling me?
- **WHAT** do the **NEXT** steps look like for me?

Our mission is driven by the truth of the gospel and defined by the mission of God. God's mission is to take what is broken and redeem it—not simply to make it better but to make it new. And the exciting part is that God Himself invites us to follow Him into a broken world as we live LIFE ON MISSION!