

# MISSIONAL MOMS

GOING DEEPER TOGETHER

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The Evangelical Covenant Church

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A companion Bible study to Helen Lee's  
*The Missional Mom: Living with Purpose at Home and in the World*



The Evangelical Covenant Church

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# WELCOME



Welcome to Missional Moms! In creating this Bible study, we want to help you grow deeper in your understanding of what it means to live missionally. It's meant to be experienced with a group of women who really want to grow in their faith and live it out in real ways—ways that impact their world.

As you work through the book and the study, you'll be challenged to think deeply, to set aside the assumptions you've lived with and examine your life and the values you hold in your family—even the way you raise your children. We invite you to ask difficult questions and find real answers in light of God's word. It may be uncomfortable at times, and joyful at other times, but we especially hope that it will take you to a new place in your faith and in your life. A place that is fresh and meaningful and life-giving.

Note: Each participant will need a copy of this Bible Study and a copy of *The Missional Mom: Living with Purpose at Home and in the World* by Helen Lee, published by Moody Press.

*Denee Anderson and Meagan Gillan*

**ABOUT THE BOOK:** *The Missional Mom* provides a thoughtful and inspiring perspective on what it means to be a purposeful mother, one who not only loves her kids but who wants to make a difference in the world. This book will challenge you towards counter-cultural, mission-driven living through the stories and examples of many mothers who are demonstrating these ideas in their own life. *The Missional Mom* also affirms Christian mothers who desire to not only to build their families in a Christ-like way, but engage the world with their skills, abilities, and interests. It both values the importance of a woman's role in her home but also encourages her to heed the stirrings God has planted within her to extend her influence, both within and outside the walls of her home. The book was authored by award-winning Christian journalist Helen Lee, who is a frequent conference and church speaker on the topic of missional motherhood and family; she currently serves as an associate editor at InterVarsity Press.



CHAPTER ONE

# The Missional Mom... Embraces the Call of Her Missional God

“Our primary calling is to be with God, to immerse ourselves in His immeasurable love and grace. Everything else flows out of this connection, which is the absolute number one priority.” —Os Guinness

1. Do you agree or disagree with the idea that your primary calling is to be with God? What does it mean to you to be with God and to “immerse ourselves in his immeasurable love and grace?”
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
2. Think about how you most enjoy serving others in God’s kingdom. Jot the first three things that come to your mind here.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
3. Thinking about this can help point you to the ways you may be called to serve God. In light of this, can you articulate what your calling is as you currently understand it?
  - a. If you are not sure of your calling, write a few words describing your primary gifts and talents.
  - b. How do you use your gifts and talents in your daily life?

4. In chapter one, the author says that motherhood, while a very important and high calling, may not be a woman's highest calling or primary mission. What do you think about this idea? Do you agree with this concept, and why or why not?

a. Was this a new idea to you?

5. In what ways does your family enjoy helping or serving others?

a. What are the particular strengths and unique qualities of your family that you can offer to God that he can use to further his kingdom?

6. Have you ever thought of your home as a missional outpost? Jot down a few things you could do to move your home and family in that direction.

a.

b.

c.

## Connecting with God's Word

1. Read Genesis 12:1-4. What did God tell Abram to do?

2. What are the three promises God makes to Abram?

a.

b.

c.

3. What is Abram's response to God?

4. What would Abram's decision look like today? Think about a time or place where you feel most comfortable. Is it at home, at work, in your neighborhood, your friends, or with your church family?

a. If you were to hear a call from God asking you to get up and go, would you?

b. What is your initial reaction to this idea of leaving everything familiar and moving into a place of the unknown?

5. Read Hebrews 11:8-13. Hebrews 11 is often referred to as the "Faith Hall of Fame." It introduces an impressive group of Old Testament figures. Abraham is one of many who demonstrated incredible trust and courage. For each of the verses below, write the things that Abraham and Sarah did "by faith."

Verse 8:

Verse 9:

Verse 11:

What is the definition of faith according to Hebrews 11:1?

6. Read Ephesians 2:8-10 in the NIV, and fill in the blanks.

For it is by \_\_\_\_\_  
you have been saved, through  
\_\_\_\_\_—and  
this is not from yourselves, it is a gift of  
God—not by works, so that no one can  
\_\_\_\_\_. For we are  
God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do  
\_\_\_\_\_, which God  
has prepared in advance for us to do.

The gift of our salvation calls us to give back! We give back to God and to others by rising up to do the good works he has prepared for us. When have you seen good works that you felt were “prepared in advance” for you to accomplish?

As you consider your current situation, do you feel you are engaging in the good works that God has prepared for you to do? Why or why not?

CHAPTER TWO

# The Missional Mom... Resists Cultural Pressures

“The longer we are in a particular cultural context, the more likely we are to absorb its rays and become altered by it.” —p. 33, *The Missional Mom*

1. How do you define “culture?”
2. In what ways have you considered it potentially necessary to protect your family from cultural influences surrounding you?
3. To what degree have you bought in to the idea that achievement leads to contentment (p. 34)?

a. How have you found yourself living out this belief in your family setting?

b. After reading this chapter, has your perspective changed?

4. The author talks about wanting the very best for her children so much that she overloaded her son’s schedule. What realization did she come to (p. 41)?

a. Do you struggle with a similar tendency?

b. How might you adjust your lifestyle or parenting style to reflect a healthier perspective?

5. What is so dangerous about wanting the best for our kids when it comes to schools, neighborhoods, friends, and more?

a. Why should we be careful with wanting to protect our children by giving them every possible advantage in life?

b. What might be the spiritual dangers of this lifestyle?

6. As parents, we may feel we can control circumstances by seeking what seems best for our children. On page 36-37, the author writes about the moment she realized that God is her children's primary shepherd.

a. How would you describe yourself with regard to exerting control over your child's life? Are you high control? Low control? Somewhere between? Describe.

7. Consider again the idea that you are not your child's primary shepherd. As you think about the number of activities your child is involved in each week, including school, music, sports, church, etc., would you say the schedule is (select one):

- Super busy Busy
- Moderately busy
- Relaxed
- Completely laid back

a. How would you describe the rhythm of your family's life?

b. Is it overly busy and scheduled, and if so, what is the underlying reason?

8. How might your family and your kids be well-served by taking a breather from excessive activity?

a. If you are not overly involved as a family, how could you use your available time to help others?

9. We've talked about the cultural pressures that bear down on our children and families. Choose one thing to work on in the coming week. Write it down here, and pray for God's wisdom and help as you move toward a more missional lifestyle.

## Connecting with God's Word

1. Read 1 John 2:15-17, NLT. John shows the clear choices we face between loving "the world" and its pleasures, and loving God our Father. What are the three things he says it offers us?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

(the lust of the \_\_\_\_\_)

b. \_\_\_\_\_

(the lust of the \_\_\_\_\_)

c. \_\_\_\_\_  
(the pride of \_\_\_\_\_)

d. Which of these impacts your family the most?

e. When, where or how do you observe this?

f. Identify one step you might take to strengthen  
“the love of the Father in you.”

2. Read Philippians 3:12-14, NLT. It is important to remember we will never be perfect in this life, and the battle against culture will be constant. We must press on in our obedience to Jesus. What steps can you take today or this week to keep you moving towards Jesus and away from what the culture of consumerism and materialism tells you to do? My steps:

a.

b.

c.

d.

3. Read Psalm 1:1-3, NIV. As you consider how your family might move toward a more missional lifestyle, this psalm offers great perspective. Where does your family encounter “the way of the wicked, the path of sinners or the company of mockers?”

a. What does the psalmist suggest we do instead of following those paths?

4. \_\_\_\_\_ in the law of the \_\_\_\_\_. Think on it \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. This results in our being like a \_\_\_\_\_ planted by \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

b. In what ways can the image of a tree by the riverbank serve as a fitting symbol for your family?

c. Why does the tree need water?

d. What happens if it does not get water?

e. God's word is like water for your family as it grows. It is vital to your flourishing! Many families struggle to read God's word together regularly, even though it's vital to the ability to stay healthy and resist negative influences. As a family, how are you doing with this?

f. On a scale of one to ten, what score would you give your family? Why?

g. It can be helpful to think about what your children will remember when they look back on your family times in the word of God. Will they have great memories that ground them as individuals? Will they wonder why they weren't exposed to God's word more often? Write your thoughts here.

5. Think of two things you can do to bring more consistency, joy, and grounding to your family times in God's word:

a.

b.

CHAPTER THREE

## The Missional Mom... Is a Cultural Rebel

1. On page 51, the author quotes Shane Claiborne who sees people, “both rich and poor, who are suffocating from the weight of the American dream.” Explain, in your own words, what you think this quote is saying:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Think about your lifestyle—your home, cars, clothing, employment, service to others, spending habits, entertainment, and the like. If your family identifies itself as a Christian family, can you identify a few ways you are noticeably different from non-Christians? Name them here:
  - a.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c.

Describe how you would like to see even greater distinctions that set your family apart, if that is how you’re feeling at this time:

3. Sacrifice is not highly valued by our culture, yet Jesus calls his followers to “deny themselves”—to sacrifice for the sake of their relationship with him. Have there been times when you or your family had the opportunity to make a sacrificial choice?
  - a. What did you do, and how did it ultimately impact you or your family? Or, do you know someone who has been in this situation, and if so, what effect did the sacrifice have on him or her?

4. The author talks about taking risks as a way to stretch our faith as we grow in a missional lifestyle. What would a faith-stretching risk look like for you? For your family?

a. Make a plan to step out and take a risk—perhaps just a brief experience with your family or a mini-vision trip to an area near your community.

c.

d.

e.

f.

g.

Which of these is most meaningful to you? Why?

## Connecting with God's Word

1. Read Matthew 5:1-16. The American Dream of prosperity and bounty has great influence on contemporary culture. When you compare it to Jesus's explanation of "blessings" in Matthew 5, it's a pretty startling contrast. List the blessings promised by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount:

a.

b.

How can the promise of this blessing compel you to act in counter-cultural ways? What can you and your family do to act in accord with this promised blessing?

2. These verses from Matthew 5 are part of the Sermon on the Mount—radical teaching of Jesus that goes against many of the values of our culture. In verses 11-16, Jesus talks about some of the painful ways we may encounter difficulty or trial as we interact with the world. Which of these is most difficult for you to accept? Why?

a. What steps could you take to grow in your ability to accept and receive this kind of difficulty?

3. Take a moment to consider your parents and how they were raised. Were they deeply impacted by the American Dream? What evidence do you see of that impact?

a. If you were raised to cherish that dream of success and prosperity, you probably feel its tug today. Describe what that's like for you personally.

4. What is the first thing you think of when you think of sacrifice? Is it a positive or negative association? Why?

a. Think of a time when you intentionally sacrificed something—it could be anything, large or small. A seat on a bus, your place in line, money for a friend in need, or time helping a family member with something they were unable to do for themselves. What was the outcome of this act? How did you feel? How do you think God viewed your action?

b. Given a choice, would you prefer to embrace or avoid the discomfort that can be caused by sacrifice?

c. Are there areas in your life in which God might be calling you to consider embracing the uncomfortable and sacrificial? What do you think they are?

5. Read 1 Peter 2:5, NLT. Consider this verse, resting in the images the verse brings to mind as you meditate on it. What does a spiritual sacrifice look like to you? What would it look like for your family?

6. Think of three spiritual sacrifices you could make that would be pleasing to God and his kingdom.

a.

b.

c.

CHAPTER FOUR

# The Missional Mom... Engages in the Needs of the World

“Christians face a choice either to turn their backs on the world or to engage in the world’s needs.”  
—John Stott

1. On p. 65, we read Carolyn Custis James’s explanation of the concept of an *ezer*—a helpmeet, from a biblical perspective. Have you ever thought of yourself as a warrior, as James describes? Why or why not?

In the space provided below, list some of the main qualities of a helpmeet in the traditional understanding. Then, opposite each word, write a contrasting quality based on your new understanding of what it means to be an *ezer*—helpmeet.

	Old	New
a.	passive	active
b.		

Old

New

c.

d.

e.

2. The author refers to Haggai 1:1-7 where the prophet calls out God’s people for caring more about their “paneled houses” (implying great luxury) and their seemingly continual pursuit of more: more material goods, more food, more drink and more clothing—greater human pleasure—without ever feeling satisfied.

As you think about these verses from Haggai, what thoughts does this raise for you in terms of your personal and family priorities? Are you spending time and energy building your own “paneled houses” while God might be encouraging you to pay attention in other areas to which he is calling you? Explain.

a. The prophet is speaking to a group of people who are in continual pursuit of more and more—yet they are never satisfied. Where do you see this continual pursuit of more at work in the world? In your community? In your family?

b. How do you face the temptation to escape rather than *engage*?

c. How might you begin a conversation with your family about engaging with the needs of the world rather than escaping them? What safeguards, habits, or practices can you put in place for your family and yourself personally that protect against the endless pursuit of more and more?

3. The author tells the story of Shayne Moore who learned about HIV/AIDS and advocated for funding. Not everyone can go to Africa, but most of us can advocate for someone who is oppressed, underserved, or underrepresented. Where do you see voiceless or underrepresented people in your community?

a. Take a moment to consider one particular need in the world—locally, regionally, or globally—that interests you. What could you do in the near future to grow in your awareness and knowledge of that particular need?

b. Have you ever considered that God may be calling you to summon the warrior within you to engage with the needs of your world? What would that look like for you, if there were no obstacles in your way?

## Connecting with God's Word

1. Read Isaiah 58:1-14. The prophet is calling out people who work hard on the outward activities of their religious faith, but whose deeds fail to impress God. They are “fasting” in an effort to please God and to make a show of their religious righteousness. But this does nothing to please God, Isaiah says! Their religion is a sham.

For missional moms, the same concern for our outward appearance can be tempting. We can strive to look like we have it all together—in our family, our home, our career—without ever consulting with God or fulfilling what he really desires for us to be and do.

2. Look at verses 1-5. What is wrong with the kind of fasting—or religious observances—the people are engaging in?

3. In verses 6-10 the prophet speaks directly in the divine first person, declaring the kind of religious observances that are important to God. List the actions pleasing to the Lord:

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

g.

h.

4. In verses 11-14 the prophet, still speaking for God, explains what we will experience when we get this right—when we rise to fulfill his justice and care for the world. Which of the word pictures in these verses speaks most directly to you? Why?

a. Look again at the actions named in verses 6-10. Which of these is most needed in the community where you live?

b. What are others doing to address this problem? Consider partnering with those who are working on this problem, or ask yourself what you might be able to do that would help “your salvation come like the dawn” as you work to fight this problem. Write your reflections and ideas for action down here.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# The Missional Mom... and Evangelism

The author makes the point that the word “evangelism” is not in the Bible, yet the “evangel” or good news of Jesus Christ and life in him is definitely there! The author reminds us of the disciples who “knew that their good news had to be shared, even if it meant death. For them, evangelism was so woven into the fabric of being Christ-followers, so integrally a part of their lifestyle, that no word was necessary to describe it.”

1. Before you read this chapter, what were thoughts and feelings about evangelism? Is it something you have always been comfortable with, or does it make you uneasy or uncomfortable?
2. Think about the different ways to evangelize that you have observed and reflect on how you came to faith in Jesus and began orienting your life around him. Would you describe the process as “Bounded Set” or “Centered Set?” (See p. 87.) Which of these approaches makes the most sense to you?
3. Most of us feel inadequate and underqualified when it comes to evangelism. Yet God has given each person tremendous assets that can be used to advance God’s kingdom.  
  
On p. 91, the author cites the work of pastor and author Dave Gibbons who encourages us to ask three questions: What is my pain? What is in my hand? Where is Nazareth? When time allows, you may want to reflect deeply on these three questions, but for now, write one simple answer for each:
  - a. My pain:
  - b. In my hand:
  - c. Nazareth:
4. Think about the natural points in your daily life during which you have opportunities to build relationships with others. How might you take greater advantage of those opportunities to help others know Christ?

Take a moment to list your circles of influence that could be places to be both a disciple and a discipler for Christ. List them below and then prayerfully write the name of one person from each circle of influence with whom you can build bridges and make connecting points that could move them toward Christ.

Circle

Person

a.

b.

c.

d.

5. Write a few sentences about what you learned from this chapter. Did this chapter challenge you or free you from your previous expectations and ideas about evangelism?

- a. What might you begin to do differently as a result of this new perspective?

## Connecting with God's Word

1. Read Luke 19:1-10. In this passage, we see Jesus taking time to connect with a despised tax collector—someone utterly rejected by those in his community. While we may have a few “notorious sinners” in our lives or circles of influence, it’s more likely that there are people we simply dislike or try to avoid. Who would that be for you?

- a. As you think about your community, who are you aware of who would be considered a “notorious sinner” like Zacchaeus? Have you ever approached someone like that?

b. Why or why not?

c. What steps could you take to approach a Zaccheus-type person?

2. What was the outcome of the time Jesus and Zacchaeus spent together?

3. Read John 4:1-18. In the context of this culture, a few things are important to know: men didn't speak to women publicly; no one willingly engaged with Samaritans; most women drew water from the well early in the morning.

4. List three things you notice about Jesus's interaction with the woman:

a.

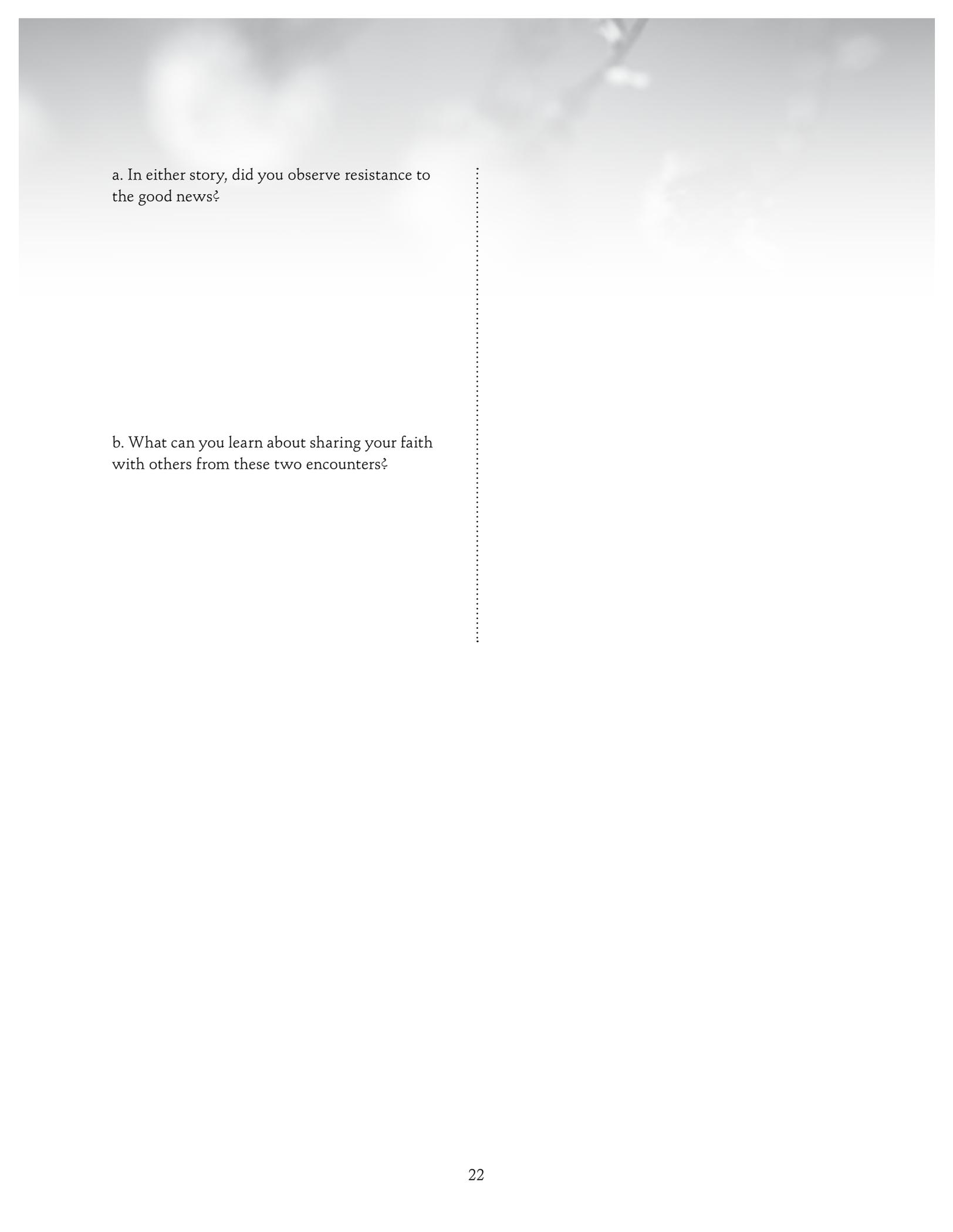
b.

c.

5. Read John 4:19-30. Jesus transitions from a casual interchange to speaking the truth of the gospel to the Samaritan woman. What specifically did he tell her about himself?

a. How did she respond?

6. Compare these two encounters of Jesus. What do they have in common?



a. In either story, did you observe resistance to the good news?

b. What can you learn about sharing your faith with others from these two encounters?

## CHAPTER SIX

# The Missional Mom... Loves the “Least of These”

In this chapter, the author talks about the radical posture of Jesus as he specialized in loving society’s rejects and “unlovables”—the very kind of people we might be inclined not to love. She suggests that missional moms will develop this same affinity for loving the unlovable.

1. Fear, lifestyle differences, language barriers, economic disparity, and more can build a lack of empathy and understanding in us. As you think about the people who you can’t imagine taking time to love, or even be near, is it possible these are the very people God is calling you to seek out and love?
  - a. How could you and your family connect?
2. Where, in your community, are possible “least of these” people?
  - a. How could you and your family connect?
3. In this chapter, the author reminds us that loving “the least of these” is just as important of a spiritual discipline as praying and reading the Bible are. What are the spiritual disciplines that you strive to live out on a regular basis?
  - a. Have you ever thought about loving the least in God’s kingdom as a spiritual discipline? Why or why not?
4. From the time you became a Christ-follower until today, how much of your spiritual life has been shaped by a desire to love those who are poor, oppressed, or disadvantaged? Write a

percentage amount from 0 to 100.

a. What steps could you take to move your desire to “love the least” to a higher percentage?

b. What would it take for you to make a first step out of your comfort zone toward loving in this way?

5. As we consider “loving the least of these” it can be tempting to love from arm’s length—to give money, donate food, or undertake other charitable acts that placate our feelings of concern, to help us feel better about ourselves as givers. It’s good to give money, and in some situations, it’s the very best way to help. But when Jesus says we are to be like him in all things, should it not apply to loving the unlovable as well? Reflect on this idea.

Chapter six is filled with accounts of women who took that difficult step and put themselves in a place of discomfort, ministering to those they thought would be difficult to love. In each case, what was the result? (See pages 104-108.)

6. Remember the encouragement on p. 109 to “invest in areas of natural passion and interest,” because it will help increase the likelihood that you’ll remain involved long-term. Identify a cause or need that is very important to you and begin to pray. Watch for opportunity and take small steps. What cause or need concerns you most? What is it that so breaks your heart that it sometimes keeps you up at night?

a. Write a prayer expressing to God why this concern is so important to you.

## Connecting with God’s Word

1. Read Luke 6:32-34. In this passage, Jesus offers these challenging words, “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you?” As you reflect on your current relationships, what percent of them would you say are focused on people who respond to your friendship and kindness by loving you back? Write a percentage amount from 0 to 100.
  
2. How important is living a life of safety to you? How much do you desire safety for your children? (See pages 106-108.)
  - a. How do you balance the desire to protect and nurture your children with the call to live by faith, trusting that God is in control of the future?

3. Read Matthew 25:31-40. This points to the incarnational nature of ministry—the idea that Jesus is God “incarnate” or “in the flesh,” and he is present in every person we encounter. When we serve people, Jesus says, we serve him. This idea is difficult enough to keep in mind as we deal with friends and family. Do you find it difficult to see Jesus in people whom you encounter? If so, why?

4. What can you do to strengthen your ability to see Jesus in every person you encounter?

5. Jesus—in the person of the king in the story—cites specific actions that delight him as he judges. List the specific ways people helped:

a.

b.

c.

6. When you consider your gifts and talents and interests, which of these seems the most natural for you to act on? Why?

7. What might that look like in your context or community? Where are the hungry? The thirsty? Those needing a place to live or clothing? Where are the prisoners?

a. Which of these could you approach?

b. Do you have a friend who could join you?

8. Which of these do you find most difficult to consider doing? Why?

9. Read verse 40 again. Summarize the important idea in this verse.

10. What does verse 40 tell you about those living on the margins in our communities?

a. How does this motivate you to consider reaching out to the least, the last, and the lost?

b. In verses 41-46, Jesus explains what will happen to those who did not minister to those in need. What are your feelings as you read this passage? Can you see yourself speaking with those who ask the question in verse 44? Why or why not?

c. Reflect on your need to reach out to the “least of these,” and consider one way you can move toward loving those at the margins, as Jesus encourages in Matthew 25.



CHAPTER SEVEN

# The Missional Mom... Is Third Culture

1. How do you prefer to identify yourself ethnically? What word or words do you use to identify your race?
2. Briefly describe your experience of a significant friendship with someone from a different racial or ethnic background. How did the friendship begin? How did you benefit from it? In what ways was it challenging?
  - a. What did you learn about yourself from that relationship?
3. In this chapter, the author quotes Dave Gibbons as he defines third culture as “the mind-set and will to love, learn and serve in any culture, even in the midst of pain and discomfort.” He goes on to say that, “the ramifications of not being third culture are serious: we die spiritually.” Why, does he say, “we die” (p. 120)?
  - a. What happens when we push away from being third culture?
  - b. Refer to the definitions on p. 120 of first, second, and third culture. As you think about yourself at this moment in your life, would you say you are first culture, second culture, or third culture? Why?

4. Identify one meaningful experience you've had that was a true third culture encounter. What was it like? What parts of it challenged you?

a. What parts were good and meaningful for you?

b. What about that experience stretched you beyond your comfort zone?

5. What could you do to seek out being a third culture person in your current setting?

a. In what ways could you potentially become more of a third culture person? Who would you reach out to? Where could you go? What relationships could you develop? What questions would you need to ask?

6. Consider the question of race and culture as it impacts your children. How often do you talk about race and ethnicity with your children?

a. Do you feel competent discussing racial differences with your children?

7. What influences are shaping the perceptions of race in your children's lives?

8. Many missional families find that their children experience a more ethnically diverse milieu than their parents. What can you learn from your children about racial diversity and relationships?

## Connecting with God's Word

Read Ruth 1:1-22. We read the story of a racially mixed family that undergoes great difficulty, moving to a foreign land and bringing into their family mix daughters-in-law who are of a different race.

1. What were the conditions that led the family of Naomi and Elimelech to migrate to Moab?
2. What happened to Elimelech?

3. After Naomi's sons died, she gave her blessing for her daughters-in-law to return to their homeland. Why did she decide to send them away instead of asking them to join her?

4. One daughter-in-law, Ruth, refused to leave Naomi. Reread verses 16-18. What pledge does Ruth make to her mother-in-law? What, specifically, does Ruth say about the family of Naomi in her pledge?

5. Do you think it could be said about Ruth that she was intentionally choosing to become a third-culture person in this moment?

- a. What do you think you would have done in the same situation?

6. What does Ruth's response teach us about growing our faith by taking the uncomfortable path?

a. Reflect on a moment when your faith led you to make a choice regarding culture or race that led you down an uncomfortable road. What was the outcome?

7. Read Revelation 7:9-12. Write these verses in your own words, as though you were relating it to a friend or to one of your children.

8. John describes a great crowd in heaven. Who makes up this group?

9. "Every nation, tribe and people" covers some significant racial diversity. Have you ever pictured heaven like this—as colorful, noisy, multi-lingual, and multi-cultural?

a. When you picture yourself in this crowd, what does it feel like? Comfortable? Challenging? Fun?

10. If we are going to be third culture in heaven, it makes sense that we prepare now in our relationships, our worship, and every other part of life. What is comfortable about this diversity for you? What is not?

CHAPTER EIGHT

# The Missional Mom... Creates Missional Families

1. In order for us to have missional families, some of our families may need to undergo a culture shift. Have you ever thought of yourself as a culture creator? What four words describe the kind of culture you want your child or children to experience in your home?

a.

b.

c.

d.

2. As you seek to be a missional parent, how much does your family culture express a vibrant faith that will stick with your kids? Explain.

a. How do you think your children would answer the previous question?

3. Can you think of an experience you've had as a parent in which you have acted counter to the dominant cultural values? What was it like?

a. What was the outcome?

4. The author says missional families:
  - a. Resist materialism by distinguishing wants from needs
  
  - b. Demonstrate generosity by giving freely and holding possessions loosely
  
  - c. Do not shield their children from the realities of life but impart understanding about the needs in the world
  
  - d. Make a regular practice of hospitality, willingly opening their homes
  
  - e. Consider radical expressions of hospitality like adoption
  
  - f. Serve together, exposing and involving their children in missional ministry
  
5. Which of these is most closely aligned with your family's gifts, strengths, and unique family personality?

- a. Identify one of these you are doing well as a family.
  - b. Identify one of these you'd like to work on.
  
6. What ideas did this chapter raise to help your children and family reflect a vibrant, missional faith?
  - a. What is a family activity or project you can take on together to strengthen your missional efforts?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. How would you need to prepare?

## Connecting with God's Word

1. In chapter 8 we read many great ideas for incorporating missional living into family life. Read the verses below and rewrite them in your own words, making them as personal as you can, taking into account your context, community and family situations.

a. Missional moms resist materialism

Hebrews 13:5

1 Timothy 6: 6-10

Romans 12:2

b. Missional moms constantly find ways to demonstrate generosity.

Luke 21:1-4

1 Timothy 6:17-19

c. Missional moms do not shield their children from the realities of life.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9

Romans 3:23

Galatians 5:19-21

1 Peter 4:24-25

d. Missional moms make a regular practice of hospitality.

Hebrews 13: 1-3

e. Missional moms consider radical expressions of hospitality, such as adoption.

Deuteronomy 10:18

Matthew 25: 35-40

James 1:27

f. Missional moms help their families serve together.

1 John 3:17-19

Matthew 5:14-16

2. Choose one or two of the points and verses above to discuss with your family by asking, “What does this mean for us?” and “How can we live this out together?”

a. Which verse do you most want and need to focus on?

b. Why?

c. Consider memorizing this verse as a family.



CHAPTER NINE

# The Missional Mom... Is a Culture Maker

1. Culture can be defined as “values and practices that determine how things get done,” or “language, assumptions, beliefs, and habits that characterize an organization or entity.”

How would you describe the culture of your community? Church? Extended family? Jot down at least three words for each.

Community:

Church:

Family:

2. Have you ever thought of yourself as a culture maker, or change agent in your world?

If not, why not? If so, where and when have you been able to create culture?

3. The author mentions four examples of ways missional moms can be culture-makers:

- a. Bringing healing to a world of suffering
  
- b. Being a bridge-builder between the resourced and the under-resourced
  
- c. Leveraging the power of the blog
  
- d. Investing in the next generation

Which one touches you most deeply, or which one do you feel is most doable for you in your current situation?

What are some other ways you can be a culture-maker? What are some culture-making efforts you are already engaging in?

- 4. Have you seen your culture change through your involvement in this area?

If so, how?

- 5. In this chapter, the author makes the point that women have great opportunity to create culture in their vocational calling. Whether you work part-time or full-time, from home or in an office, or are a stay-at-home mom, how and where have you seen opportunities to influence culture?

- 6. Where is your greatest opportunity to bring change that positively impacts God's kingdom?

7. List three things you can do in the next several weeks to strengthen the power of your influence. Pray for creativity and confidence as you consider each action:

a.

b.

c.

## Connecting with God's Word

1. Read Acts 4:1-21. Read the story of Peter and John coming before the Sanhedrin, and reflect on these questions.

John and Peter really shook things up in Jerusalem. Their radical belief in Jesus pushed toward the creation of a new culture—one that flew in direct opposition to the dominant, prevailing culture. Here are five of the simple things they did to create culture. List a few of your own observations.

a. Let the Holy Spirit speak through them v. 8

b. Spoke clearly and transparently keeping Jesus in the conversation v. 10

c. Shared their experience v. 10

d. Were bold in their presentation

e. Were clear about their values and loyalties

2. It can sometimes be difficult to share our faith perspectives openly. What can we learn from Peter and John's experience that will encourage us to be culture makers today?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. Paul explains his flexibility in dealing with a variety of people and cultures. As Paul exhibits this flexibility, what would you say is his highest priority?

a. What does Paul seem to value the most?

b. How did he adapt to the surrounding culture(s) to fulfill this priority?

c. Have you ever experienced the feelings Paul expresses in this passage, adapting your behavior (not compromising your values) to fit in with those around you?

d. How is this different from compromise?

4. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. As culture-making moms, it's important that we know and celebrate the gifts God has given us so we can use them wisely to influence culture. How and when have you seen God use you specifically in the area of your strongest gifts?

a. What was the result?

b. Write a prayer committing your gifts to God for his use. Thank him for making you just as you are.

CHAPTER TEN

# The Missional Mom... Needs Missional Community (and Vice Versa)

We're designed for community, living, and working together with Jesus as our center. Missional moms need to connect with other moms for encouragement, mutual learning, and help in serving missionally. Church is one place where that can happen.

Perhaps you've heard the parenting principle "Catch your child being good." In this chapter, the author talks about pastors and churches that "catch" women behaving missionally and invites them to tell their stories. This, in turn, facilitates connection and community.

1. What does your church do to encourage all women to act missionally?

2. What more could be done in your congregation to facilitate missional living and serving?

3. Since the church is the primary community of faith to which most of us belong, it plays a key role in supporting and encouraging women in the missional work they do.

a. As a church, do you challenge the cultural values that go against missional ones?

b. If yes, where and how do you see evidence of that? If no, what would you like to see?

4. If this is a potential area of growth for your congregation, what small steps could you take to create a climate that challenges cultural values that work against missional ones?

5. Do you live in proximity to other moms in your church community?

a. How can you leverage your proximity to reach out together in your neighborhoods? Think of shared service projects, community based activities or fundraisers.

6. Is there someone in your circle of influence you have always wanted to reach out to, but haven't? Write that person's first name here:

a. Consider telling another Christian friend or your small group about this person, and ask them to pray for you as you reach out. Remind them that you desire accountability from them. Pray, take initiative, and share the results with those who have been praying for you.

7. Consider your local church. Do you engage in missional ministry? Have you begun in some areas? Or do you need a "missional revolution"? Put a dot to represent where your church is currently (1 = We need a missional revolution; 5 = We are engaged in missional ministry):

---

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

a. What are some steps you could take to further raise awareness and educate others in your church?

b. Who will you share this idea with so you're not doing it alone?

8. In this chapter, we read several ways churches can encourage missional moms. Read the list below and consider your congregation.

*Missional churches...*

- a. Affirm and celebrate missional moms when they find them.
  
- b. Support the work women are doing, whether in or outside the home.
  
- c. Challenge cultural values that go against missional ones.
  
- d. Encourage service along the lines of gifts, not roles
  
- e. Challenge husbands to be missional as well
  
- f. Encourage moms to both “Bloom Where You’re Planted” and “Go Where You’ll Bloom”

Put a check mark by the areas your church is doing well. Put a circle by the areas where things could be improved.

- 9. How can you help support your church in becoming more missional?

## Connecting with God’s Word

In order to answer God’s missional call on our lives, sometimes we are called to live as change-agents, or to work “against the grain.”

1. Read Mark 2:13-16. Consider Jesus as our example for living missionally. What did he do in this passage that was against the grain of the current culture?
  - a. And, by implication, what does salt do in the world?
  
  - b. How about light? (It may be necessary to state the obvious here!)
  
2. In Matthew 5:13-16, we are challenged by Jesus to consider our role in culture as salt and light. What does salt do to food?

3. Whether we are talking about flavor or illumination, Jesus reminds us that we have an important part to play in the world. Have you ever considered what it means for you to “add flavor” to your community by living missionally? Or that God might be calling you to illuminate a dark part of your community?

4. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31. The way God designed our individual bodies to be made of different parts is a model for understanding how we should work together as the church—the gathered body of Christ.

a. When you think about how you serve in your church or community, what body part do you represent and why?

5. Also in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, Paul lists some of the many gifts believers may have. When you look at the list of gifts in the above passage, what gifts do you think you have?

a. Are you using your gifts effectively at this point in your life? Why or Why not?

6. God intends for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be used in cooperation with one another to build up the body of Christ. Reflect on your gifts for a moment and think of a time when you were genuinely using your gift(s) in cooperation with others. What did that look like? What did it feel like? What was the result?

7. Read Ephesians 2:10. Describe your feelings and thoughts about whether you are engaging in the good works that God has prepared for you to do.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

# The Missional Mom... Surrenders Her All

1. As we wrap up this study, we want to be sure to get the most out of it. Take a moment to reflect on the experience of reading *The Missional Mom* and doing this study. List three or four significant “learnings” or take-away ideas that will remain with you for a long time.

a.

b.

c.

d.

2. Prayerfully make a list of ideas, challenges, or areas of conviction where you think God might be nudging you.

3. What do you believe God is calling you to do now, at this point in your journey, with God?

4. Another way to consider this question is to evaluate your life right now and ask:

*Is there something I need to reduce?*

Busyness?

Consumerism?

Screen time?

Dependence on “success markers?” (see p. 180)

Something else?

*Is there something I need to increase?*

Reaching out to the marginalized?

Multiethnic friendships?

Exploring your spiritual gifts by using them in new ways?

Risk taking?

Something else?

5. Because progress is more likely when you create goals for yourself, list the action steps you will take to move forward in these areas:

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

6. Read the quote by Keith Meyers on page 185:  
“The only way to actually get missional in your life is to begin to enter into a life of intentional formation with Jesus. Until people really have Jesus as their teacher, participating in life with him on a moment by moment basis, then all the talk about being missional doesn’t go anywhere.”
  - a. What intentional practices have you put in place regularly that are helping you grow in your relationship with Jesus?
  
7. How can these lead to becoming more missional in the ways you believe God desires?

## Connecting with God’s Word

1. Read Philippians 2:17, NLT. Paul writes, “But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God, just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy.”

This liquid offering is explained in Exodus 29:40. The priests would often pour out wine along with the lamb of the burnt offering. This would be part of the sacrifice that was offered to God. Paul saw his life as a sacrifice being poured out to God. It was not just a one-time sacrifice, but his entire life represented the pouring of the drink offering.

Paul reminds us in Philippians 4:9 that we should “Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.”

- a. Reflect on your current lifestyle, culture, and habits, considering how you use your time, money, and other resources. Using Paul’s imagery, consider that your life is being poured out, a little bit each day, some days more than others. What are you pouring your life into?

- b. Primarily your own happiness and goals? Or are you pouring yourself out to make a kingdom difference?

c. What evidence might others see that this is what is really happening?

2. Living a missional life is not easy and has the potential to turn your world upside down! As you consider your willingness to live missionally and to take your family in that direction, rate yourself on a scale of one to five with one being not at all willing and five being completely willing and ready to act.

My rating today:

\_\_\_\_\_

1            2            3            4            5

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

a. Take a moment to prayerfully reflect on where you are and where you want to be. Commit your desire and dream to God and ask for help. God has limitless resources of strength, creativity, wisdom, and delight as you move forward. Write a prayer expressing this and share it with one friend or with your family.

My Prayer:



