

"...You shall love your neighbor as yourself..."
Matthew 22:36-40



 *The Plan*



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Introduction

GOD IS THE GOD OF RELATIONSHIPS. He is not about religion or rituals, but about relationships. When He first created Adam and Eve, His desire was to have an intimate relationship with them. But when they sinned, their relationship with God and each other was severed. So God provided a way to restore the relationship He once enjoyed with people through His Son, Jesus. When He commanded us to love Him with all our hearts, minds, and souls, and strength, He knew it could only be done within the context of a relationship with Him. When He commanded us to love our neighbors as ourselves, He was well aware it can only be done through relationships in perfect proximity with one another.

God loves relationships. He longs for us to be in relationships with the people around us, but relationships are hard to build and maintain. Personal contact has been replaced by phone calls and emails. We focus on work to build secure futures, but we have not invested in building solid relationships. Tasks have become our master - so much so that it almost seems like a waste to stop and spend time with people. We've replaced quantity time with snippets of quality time. But God is still faithful and remains in the people business.

Some of us are so far removed from relationships with our neighbors that we need a little reminder to invest in the people in perfect proximity; more specifically, lost people. This Tea Talk Plan will serve as a reminder and provide tools to help us develop and maintain relationships with our neighbors who may not know Jesus.

Neighborhood relationship building begins with a simple four-step process from the acrostic P-L-A-N:

- **PRAY** - Without prayer, it's all our work; but when we pray, it's all God's work.
- **LIST** - Write down the names of people God places on your heart who are in perfect proximity to you.
- **ACT** - Take action and start forming a relationship with your neighbors.
- **NURTURE** - Once a woman has placed her trust in Christ, start a process of nurturing her relationship with Christ by further study together.

The remainder of the Tea Talk Plan will provide a step-by-step process to guide you through relationship building with those in perfect proximity as you share your faith.



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Lesson 1: Pray

KEY VERSE: Read LUKE 10:2

And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

WHY IS PRAYER SO CRUCIAL?

When Jesus sent out the 72 (Luke 10:1), he looked at the harvest and found it was ripe. This passage reminds us that Jesus valued prayer - especially when it came to winning souls. So why do we pray? Because Jesus exhorted us to!

HOW CAN WE PRAY?

There are several people who need prayer. It is important you pray for yourself and those in perfect proximity. Here are some suggestions for prayer:

PRAY FOR YOU:

1. Pray God will help you see the women to whom He wants you to minister.
2. Pray God will give you an unconditional love for the women He's placed on your heart.
3. Pray that you will be yielded to the Holy Spirit in the way He wants to use you.
4. Pray that God will build a relationship between you and your neighbors based on love and trust.
5. Pray for God to give you an opportunity to share Christ with your neighbors.
6. Pray God will give you boldness and clarity as you share about Christ.
7. Pray that sharing your life and your faith will flow naturally from a heart that is connected with God's heart.
8. Pray God will grant you favor with those in perfect proximity.

PRAY FOR YOUR NEIGHBORS:

1. Pray that God will give them a tender heart towards God and His truth.
2. Pray for "seeking" neighbors to confess Christ as Lord (Romans 10:9-10).
3. Pray for them to receive Christ as their Savior (John 1:12).
4. Pray God's Word will take root in their hearts and grow (Colossians 2:6-7).



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Lesson 2: List

KEY VERSES: Numbers 1:1-2

The LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, "Take a census of all the congregation of the people of Israel, by clans, by fathers' houses, according to the number of names, every male, head by head."

WHY MAKE A LIST?

God commanded Moses to make a list for a purpose. So when we make a list, it is for a purpose, whether it be to record names of those who need prayer or are asking the Lord to give you an opportunity to know those who are in close proximity to you.

HOW DO YOU MAKE A LIST?

Here is a tool to get to know each individual Tea Talk friend God places on your heart to minister to: Click [Tools & More](#) to download the Perfect Proximity Profile card and get started making your Tea Talk list to get to know those in perfect proximity to you.



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Lesson 3: Act

PART 1

ACT WITH A PLAN: By Diligently Preparing Your Steps

Key verse: Read 2 Chronicles 31:21

And every work that he undertook in the service of the house of God and in accordance with the law and the commandments, seeking his God, he did with all his heart, and prospered.

Hezekiah was a king who diligently served the Lord and he prospered. As daughters of the true king, we are called to diligently serve God by reaching out to those in perfect proximity.

One way to be Diligent is to prepare & plan.

Tips for diligence:

1. Follow the steps to pray & list
2. Set the dates for your Tea Talk. Try to be consistent (either biweekly or monthly).
3. Set a date on your calendar for when you will invite your neighbors to your Tea Talk.
4. Print out the **Invites** with your scheduled Tea Talk time and location.
5. Go to your neighbors & hand deliver an invitation for your first Tea Talk. Leave on the door if no one is there. If person does answer but can't attend, ask how can you pray for her.
6. Before your scheduled Tea Talk, look up the **Teas, Sweets, and Treats** recipes you'd like to prepare & purchase needed supplies.
7. Prepare your Tea Talk **Beautiful You Devotional**, **Icebreakers** & items for discussion.
8. Print out **Perfect Proximity Profile Cards**.
9. On your scheduled day, Pray, Brew your tea & Prepare your sweets & treats for guests to arrive.
10. Follow up with the ones who couldn't come.



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PART 2

ACT IN LOVE – By Building Relationships

KEY VERSE: Read I Thessalonians 2:8-12

So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

WHY IS IT CRUCIAL TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS?

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians to remind them that he shared his life with them as he shared the Gospel. When we build relationships with the lost, we share our lives with them as well. Remember that building relationships begins and ends with loving God and loving others. We may love people for years but not see any spiritual fruit. God will not ask us to give an account of whether our relationship brought forth spiritual fruit or not. He will, however, ask us whether we were faithful in loving Him and the people he brought in perfect proximity. Our job is to build relationships and share the Good News. God's job is to transform their hearts and convert them to followers of Jesus Christ.

HOW CAN WE BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR NEIGHBORS?

FIRST TEA TALK

1. Act with a Plan
2. Meet and Greet (first 30 min)—
 - a. Serve Tea, Sweets & Treats and allow time for introductions of each guest
 - b. Use nametags
 - c. Have each guest fill out a Perfect Proximity Profile card
 - d. Have coffeehouse music lightly playing in background
3. Break the Ice—Provide icebreakers to let others get to know each other in a relaxed setting (30 minutes)
 - a. For suggestions, click **Tools & More** for ideas
4. Introduce your vision for additional Tea Talks (5-10 minutes)
 - a. Go ahead and give the next date
5. Pray & Follow Up
 - a. End by praying with your guests & dismiss
 - b. Read over **Perfect Proximity Profile cards** and add birthdays, anniversaries, etc. to your calendar. Pray over requests
 - c. Follow up with thank-you cards, telling them you prayed over their requests and remind them of the next date



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PART 3

ACT IN FAITH – By Letting Your Faith Be Known

KEY VERSES: Read Matthew 5:13-16

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO MAKE YOUR FAITH KNOWN?

We can be salt and light in our community by allowing the good deeds we do to be a glory to God, by allowing God to use us to minister to others, and by letting our faith be known when others ask why we are concerned with their needs. It is vital for people know it is God who has enabled you to minister to them. So let your faith be known!

HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR FAITH KNOWN?

There are so many different ways you can claim your faith to your neighbor. Here are some opportunities which may arise and some suggested responses:

OPPORTUNITY: A neighbor is overwhelmed by your kindness and asks, "Why are you so nice to me?"

SUGGESTION: Share with her how, "God loves you so much that He sacrificed His Son on the cross for you. This love was demonstrated while you were still a sinner. Because of that love, your response is to love God back by loving others."

OPPORTUNITY: A neighbor sees you going through a struggle in your life and is amazed you still have hope in God. She asks you, "Why?"

SUGGESTION: Share with her that your hope is not in the temporal but the eternal. Resting on God's sovereignty doesn't make his life easy, but it helps you know that someone else is in control so you don't have to be.

OPPORTUNITY: A neighbor tells you she thinks it's great you're involved in your church, but she's been burned by the church and is turned off by the hypocritical people in it.

SUGGESTION: Share with her that the church is filled with imperfect people who depend on God to help them with their daily lives as they struggle through it. They're not perfect or hypocritical people but sinners who are trying to love the Lord with all their hearts, souls, and strengths.



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PERSONAL TESTIMONY

A personal testimony or story will include your life before Christ, how you trusted Christ, and your life after accepting Christ as your Savior. This may also be an opportunity to share the Gospel with your lost neighbor. As you share your story, you can also incorporate the Gospel in it.

Here is an example of a personal testimony that includes the Gospel:

I grew up going to church, attending a Christian school, and believing in God. My parents are fine, upstanding citizens. My dad was a hard worker and my mom was a stay-at-home mom. I didn't do anything awful growing up. In fact, the worst crime I ever committed was getting a few speeding tickets.

I certainly didn't consider myself to be a bad person. I was nice, helped others, and even did some volunteer work every once in awhile. I was on the right track until my next-door neighbor, Jim, confronted me with the fact that I'm a sinner. He opened his Bible and showed me a verse that said, "For all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God." I told him that was great, but I wasn't really a sinner. Then he asked me if I ever lied. I said, "Well, maybe a few times." Then he asked me if I've ever been jealous or envious of what someone had. I told him, "Maybe once or twice in my life." Then he told me that if we lie, even once, it's still a sin. He also said if we are jealous or envious of a person, that is also considered a sin. "So," he said, "in God's eyes, you're a sinner."

He added that because we're all sinners, we deserve punishment. The punishment for our sin is we can't enter into heaven, because God lives there and He's perfect and will only have perfection in His presence. So I said to Jim, "Well, then no one will enter into heaven, because no one is perfect." He said, "Yes, that's true, but that's only half the story. You see, God loves people and made a way for them to be in His presence. He sent Jesus, His perfect Son, to die on the cross for you and me and all those who believe in Him. But not only did He die, he rose on the third day and now lives in heaven to prepare a place for all of us to be with Him."

So I asked Jim, "So how do people get into heaven then?" He said, "They put their trust in Christ for dying on the cross for them." I asked how I could put my trust in Christ and he told me that all I had to do was believe in my heart and let my belief be known to God. I did that and now I trust Christ – not myself – to pay for my sins. I believed I was a good person, but now I know that it doesn't matter if I haven't trusted Christ as my Savior. I'm still not perfect, but now I have the trust and assurance that when I die, I will be with Him in heaven.



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PART 4

ACT IN BOLDNESS – By Sharing the Gospel

KEY VERSES: Read ROMANS 10:14-15

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SHARE THE GOSPEL?

God says your feet are beautiful when they go and share the Gospel. You are a "sent one" for the Lord - whether it is overseas to a foreign land or next door to your neighbor. People will never know about the good news of Jesus unless someone is sent to them....and if they never know, they will never believe.

Notice that our job is not to make people believe, but only to share the Good News with them. It is God's job to help them believe, but it is our job to "help them know Jesus." We help them know Jesus by sharing the Gospel with them.

HOW CAN YOU SHARE THE GOSPEL?

There are many tools and ways to share the Gospel. The three most important elements of the Gospel are: sin, the cross, and faith.

STEP 1—SIN

When we talk about our sin, we're letting people know that no matter how good they are, they will never reach God's standard of perfection. Romans 3:23.

STEP 2—THE CROSS

Then we discuss the second element of the Gospel, the cross. Because God demands a payment for our sins, the punishment is death (separation from God when we die). But God provided a way out by sending his son (Christ) to die in our place on the cross. Romans 6:23. This is the gift that God offers us.

STEP 3—FAITH

The third step is to discuss faith as a means of receiving this gift of eternal life. Faith is trusting Jesus - not our own merit - for the payment of our sins....then truly putting our faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior. Ephesians 2:8-9.



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Another note worth mentioning as you share the Gospel is the resurrection of Christ. There are many men who died for a cause, but Jesus is the only one who died for a cause and was raised from the dead. There is no religious figure who claimed he died for people's sins other than Christ. There is no religious figure who was seen by hundreds of people after his death other than Jesus. Ultimately, that's what differentiates Christ from any other religious figure. As you share the Gospel, don't forget to mention the resurrection.

There will come a time in your relationship when you will discuss spiritual issues. Here are some questions you can ask to help you know where your neighbor stands spiritually, and then transition into a spiritual conversation and share the Gospel:

- Do you have any type of spiritual belief?
- Who is Jesus to you?
- If you were to die today, do you know if you will go to heaven? How do you know that?
- The Bible tells us that we can know for sure we can go to heaven. Has anyone ever shown you what the Bible says about going to heaven? If no, may I?

There are many different methods in sharing your faith. You can find some effective tools by going to www.sbtexas.com/evangelism/personal-evangelism.



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Lesson 4: Nurture

KEY VERSES: Read 1 PETER 2:2

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—

WHY DO WE NURTURE PEOPLE AFTER THEY TRUST CHRIST?

When Peter compares his readers to newborn babies, he does so with the understanding that these babies will grow up. Likewise, a person who places his or her trust in Christ is dependent on a spiritual parent as a little baby is dependent on his parents. We can help the new babies in faith by feeding them "pure spiritual milk." Once they grow up, they can learn to feed themselves. Therefore, "nurturing" a new believer spiritually is crucial in the process of your relationship with those in perfect proximity.

HOW CAN I NURTURE PEOPLE AFTER THEY TRUST CHRIST?

There are so many different resources to help people get established in the faith. These tools are designed for new believers and for mature believers who long to establish a young believer in the faith. Some of the books found helpful were:

- A Handbook for Christian Maturity: 10 Basic Steps by Bill Bright. This Book helps the young believer look up Bible verses and memorize some of them. It is an excellent tool for a young believer.
- Mentoring 101 by Ron Proctor
- Beginning steps: A growth Guide for New Believers
- New Life in Christ by CAM International
- There are additional Evangelism Tools located on at www.sbtexas.com/evangelism/personal.

In Conclusion

We pray that this tool will be the start of new relationships with those in perfect proximity to you; but more importantly, we pray this tool will help your neighbors have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Know you have been prayed for and we will continue to pray for you as you minister to others through Tea Talk in Perfect Proximity.



