

#SEE^{ALL}THEPEOPLE

Discipleship Begins with Relationship

A THREE-SESSION TEACHING & DISCUSSION SERIES

WITH REV. JUNIUS B. DOTSON AND REV. JACOB ARMSTRONG

A large photograph of Rev. Junius B. Dotson, a Black man with a mustache, wearing a grey blazer over a blue shirt. He is smiling and gesturing with his right hand. The background is a blue brick wall with a wooden slat screen and a hanging light fixture. On the left, there are three framed photos of diverse people.

STUDY GUIDE

A circular inset photo of Rev. Jacob Armstrong, a white man with glasses, wearing a grey sweater over a blue shirt, smiling.

Rev. Junius B. Dotson is General Secretary (CEO) of Discipleship Ministries.
Rev. Jacob Armstrong is senior pastor of Providence Church (a United Methodist congregation in Mt. Juliet, TN).



The “holiness of conversation [is] the image of God visibly expressed.”

— JOHN WESLEY —

How To Use This Study Guide

See the People In Your Group

This three-session teaching and discussion series is designed to be adapted to your group’s setting/context. Most will want to include:

- Welcome/get to know one another time (because everyone has a backstory),
- An opening question connecting with each person’s experience (because we join a conversation midstream), and
- “Open listening” to each other’s responses (because seeing calls for “listening love” or paying attention without judgment).

Focus on the big idea(s) for each session video with an invitation to listen for something that stands out while viewing the first video with Rev. Junius B. Dotson. After discussion and more questions, play the video conversation between Junius and Jacob, followed by more questions and conversation. Remember, the “holiness of conversation [is] the image of God visible expressed” (John Wesley).

These video-based discussion **sessions will take on a life of their own** (based on the unique persons in your group and the context of your faith community). Make sure each participant knows you **see and appreciate them**. That means first learning how love has crossed their path and brought them into your life (prevenient grace). When they know they matter to you, they will mirror your love and leadership and engage the people grace has placed in their own life zone (these places will become your shared ministry map).

SEE in every person gathered to grow and love **clues for remaking your church’s discipleship culture**. You are looking at the leaders of a new movement of grace in your church and community.

ASK/LISTEN: When you ask questions, listen for their distinct take, vocabulary, story (not just the bullet point answers in your summary/this discussion guide).

Things You Might Need

- › Wi-fi network and a computer/tablet or television with access to the SeeAllthePeople.org for video streaming
- › A PDF or printout out of this study guide
- › Pen or pencil, or smart phone and note taking app
- › Course Outline on page 3 of this Discussion Guide
- › A quick look summary/script for each session video with Junius (for discussion session leaders)

What You Will See

- › **VIDEOS:** Watch *See All the People* videos and hear Junius Dotson (with Jacob Armstrong) share how a movement of intentional discipleship can re-vitalize your church.
- › **SEE ALL THE PEOPLE CHURCHES**
View and share video stories detailing how intentional discipleship is making an impact in faith-communities across the connection.

PICK & CHOOSE what works with your group (don't try to do everything). Create your own questions rooted in your context, experience, and relationships with the people in the room.

GIVE THEM SPACE to question and wrestle with the mystery. Remember, each experience/story of how grace passes our way provides a key (the 'why') to recognizing and sharing God's love with others.

BRING the big idea(s) home with storied examples from your own life/experience.

For Further Learning

PODCASTS: Learn from pastors and leaders who are using relationship building and engagement to transform their churches and communities.

WEBINARS: Sign up for live conversations with Junius (and others) and post questions/thoughts about growing discipleship in your own church.

RADIO SERIES: Listen to the *See All the People* radio series at www.SeeAllThePeople.org

NOTE: Links to YouTube videos in this study guide are not owned by Discipleship Ministries. YouTube videos can be deleted by their copyright owners at any time after publish date of this study guide.

Optional Preparation

Invite participants to read Junius Dotson's *Developing an Intentional Discipleship System: A Guide for Congregations* and/or *Engaging Your Community: A Guide to Seeing All the People* in preparation for this three-week teaching series.

These books are available for free PDF download and for purchase online:

www.SeeAllThePeople.org

01 Introduction

- The Goal: Making Disciples of Jesus Christ
- The Question: What happens when we stop fixing and start seeing?
- Going DNA: real relationships, intentional discipleship systems
- Three Sessions:
 - Whose job is it to make disciples?
 - Stop Fixing Your Church.
 - Discipleship Begins with Relationship.
- Called to Create a new DNA

02 Whose Job is It To Make Disciples?

- First Follow: Be it to make it or (follower DNA and church culture)
- First Base: Intentional Discipleship
- Model to Make: *know, practice, go to teach, model, lead*
- Discipleship *is* Leadership: lead yourself, connect to your 'why' (God's love shared).
- Leaders change committees, teams, and cultures (and vice versa).
- Grow to Help, Help to Grow.
- Healthy people make healthy churches (and vice versa).
- Leader commitment is key to vitality and effective discipleship systems: what is your personal plan for spiritual growth?

03 Discussion: Whose Job Is It To Make Disciples?

- Discipleship begins with me.
- Connect the dots, stay focused on growth.
- Habits of Disciples
- Worship, welcome, small groups, service
- Create a climate of expectation
- Hearts aligned with vision
- Worship: the front door of your church's culture
- Shining eyes with God's heart

04 Stop Fixing Your Church

- Intentional Discipleship is focused and designed.
- Stop fixing (churches), start planning (growth opportunities).
- Stay relentlessly focused on discipleship, love by design (plan, process, people).
- Bring clarity to what you do (disciple-making) and how you do it (opportunity paths).
- Remember the 'forgotten why' (Jesus' saving love shared with all).
- Lead others to Christ, help them grow, equip them for ministry, and empower them to tell others.
- Who you are shapes what you do.
- Deep discipleship is equipping and empowering others in the journey.
- Embrace a new ethos and discipleship roadmap beyond surface programming (leader created, context adapted, authentically communicated).
- Stop fixing: Plan to See the people and your own hearts changed.

05 Discussion: Stop Fixing Your Church

- We stop fixing when we focus on God's call to love people.
- Authentic love doesn't anxiously try to program its way out of decline.
- Leaders keep focused by seeing the people they are called to reach.
- One way leaders see is to come alongside those already serving people.
- Going is 'coming alongside' in strategic partnerships that shift our focus from plans to people, changing the DNA of the church.
- Leaders ask 'show us how you serve?' and learn from those already serving.
- Do one thing to get focused outward: GO - LISTEN - COME ALONGSIDE.
- A church planter ethos (with no lawn for hosting) helps churches create ministries that 'sprout' from the lives of people.
- Leaders find those whose eyes are 'shining' to reach the community.'
- Strategic partners are like 'griots' who know the stories of their community.

06 Discipleship Begins With Relationship

- Intentional Discipleship is Relational and Engaging.
- Building Relationships and Engaging your community is part of the plan.
- See to plan, plan to see.
- 'Roots deep,' faith stirs a desire to see others experience life in Jesus.
- The closer to Christ, the more our hearts yearn for "the vast and endless sea."
- Leaders equip and empower disciples to engage and connect with people.
- Sharing God's love is our "why," relationships our "how."
- Seeing is recognizing, respecting, and responding to another's life.
- Recognition grounds engagement (*sawabona – I see you*).
- A plan to love by seeing is effective when relationships are authentic, organic, and consistent.
- Love's learning curve invites seeing and teaches empathy.
- Grace is already at work in the people we are called to see.
- God draws near/changes us through others.
- Effective ministry marries outreach and intentional discipleship.

- Leaders connect with people through a missionary mindset: What does it look like to follow Jesus in this community?
- This heart and mindset invites God's help to learn how to love.

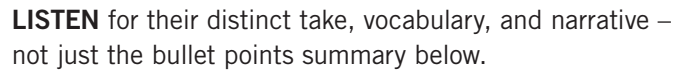
08 Closing Thoughts

- See all the People is a movement, not a program (no short cuts or checklists).
- Adapt it to your context/locality.
- If it feels challenging or even impossible, you are on the right track (pray and get to work!).

07 Discussion: Discipleship Begins With Relationship

- Discipleship begins with relationship.
- Community impacting ministry marries outreach to intentional discipleship (small groups loving people).
- Small groups = building blocks for missional engagement.
- Relational/missional discipleship is authentic organic, and consistent.
- Authentic connections and relationships begin with listening and sharing stories.
- Community engagement happens through consistent personal connections.
- Corporate engagement means retooling ministries to deepen relationships and create partnerships.
- We always connect engagement with the vision.
- Leaders help the church care by inspiring a desire to see the people on the margins.

If time permits, briefly discuss the *Introduction* video.



- Discipleship begins with relationship.
- Relational discipleship has one goal: making disciples of Jesus who change the world.
- Deep in a Jesus follower's DNA is an impulse to go – and go viral. We amplify love and create friendships that multiply grace's impact.
- Authentic relationships and on-purpose plans to share love focus our efforts to bring good news to the world God so loves.
- Discipleship and evangelism are crowd-sourced and come together, all in response to God's call to help redeem lives in our zip code (and beyond).
- In these three sessions we'll discuss whose job it is to make disciples, how to stop fixing and start designing for love, and the starting place for all disciple-making work: *seeing* relationships with people where we live, work, and play.



- What do you hope to gain from this *See All The People* teaching and discussion series?
- What do you hope to take away from this first discussion?

Ask the group to let the following questions *'run in the background'* while watching/discussing the video (don't ask them to answer – tell them to let it simmer):

- What is your plan for spiritual growth in the coming year?
- Who makes disciples in your church?

[illegible]

“To make disciples we must first be disciples.”

— JUNIUS B. DOTSON —

Open With Prayer

God help us *hear*, help us *see*, help us *help*. Amen.

Set The Stage

Some leaders will want to prep for the first discussion by sending the group a link to view the **Introduction video** before they gather or play it after discussing some of the questions below.



WATCH a video of songwriter Mac McAnally discussing the hit song “It’s My Job” popularized by Jimmy Buffett, available on the See All The People YouTube playlist:

<https://seeallthepeople.org/class-videos>



THINK about one of your first jobs (mowing lawns, waiting tables, paper route, baby-sitting/caring for siblings, etc.).



ASK/LISTEN

- How did you know what to do?
- Did someone train you or were you on your own?
- When did your work life first become ‘the buck stops with me’?
 - What happened?
 - How did you handle situations where your expertise (or lack thereof) met the needs of people, customers, or coworkers?
 - How did you get ready for work? College courses? Other preparation/learning? Mentoring or apprenticeship?
 - Who modeled best practices or showed you how (or did you learn on the job/by doing the work)?



THINK about a company, culture, or marketing campaign that puts its customer or constituency front and center.

(continued)

VIDEO RECAP: *Whose Job Is It?*

- › First Follow: Be it to make it (follower DNA and church culture)
- › First Base: Intentional Discipleship
- › Model to Make – *know, practice, go to teach, model, lead*
- › Discipleship *is* Leadership: lead yourself, (re)connect to your ‘why’ (God’s love shared)
- › Leaders change teams, committees, and cultures (and vice versa).
- › Grow to Help, Help to Grow.
- › Healthy people make healthy churches (and vice versa).
- › Leader commitment is key to vitality and effective discipleship systems: what is your plan for spiritual growth?

NOTES

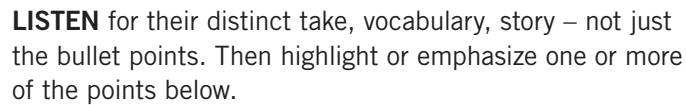
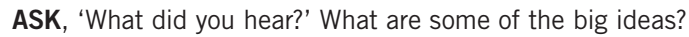
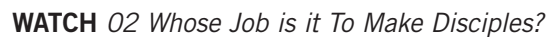
<https://seeallthepeople.org/class-videos>

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- Where did these service providers begin? With their design? With their competitors design? A ‘pain point’ or problem (what marketing people call ‘felt need’)?
- What advantage is there in beginning with the actual people who use what creators dream, make, and share?
- Do our ministries begin with the people God is calling us to touch (or with our own ‘pain points’ from another time or place)?
- **What would it mean to *stop fixing* the “product” (or program) and *start “seeing” the very people* these were originally designed to serve?**

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- Intentional Discipleship is Owned and Modeled. Disciples make disciples: first follow Jesus to lead others to him.
- First base is following Jesus on purpose (intentional discipleship).
- On purpose Christ-following (intentional discipleship) *in the DNA* of every believer *re-shapes the culture* of the church.
- Intentional Discipleship is *personal* (each believer's owned/modeled spiritual growth) and corporate (a church-wide plan to create opportunities for all to encounter Christ and grow in their faith – love by design).
- Discipleship is Personal: first *be* so you can *make* (leading yourself in a deeper experience of God's love means you *know, practice, and go* so you can *teach, model, and lead* others to Jesus Christ).
- Discipleship is Leadership: *grow* 'roots deep' into your 'why' (God's love in Jesus) to *help* others build a life on grace, too.
- Commitment to personal discipleship changes the culture of your church, creating vital faith communities that create healthy disciples.

[illegible]

- How have you grown or changed in some area of your life this year (as a skilled worker, friend, spouse, neighbor, person, citizen, life-interpreter, social media presence/absence, etc.)?
 - What was key to your growth/change? (new learning or training? practice? team activities? new or renewed personal disciplines? accountable friendships?)

- ## NOTES



**Suggest a resource like Bishop Rueben Job's book on John Wesley's General Rules (Three Simple Rules) or Elaine Heath's Five Means of Grace: Experience God's Love the Wesleyan Way.*

[illegible]

Future Discussion



Junius and Jacob's conversation turns quickly from *'be a disciple to make disciples'* to the practical need to connect the dots between the "essentials" and a church culture focused on making disciples.

Intentional discipleship calls for ‘dot connecting’ and enculturation, linking people to every mission-driven activity in the church. This conversation can be a great transition to *Stop Fixing Churches* – a session that focuses on creating an disciple-making plan (love by design).



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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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ASK/LISTEN (choose one or two)

- Since 'it's my job' to lead others to Jesus, what is the script for doing that in our church/community?
 - Are there any old scripts or 'wineskins' that might need to be discarded to adapt to the reality of our context/community?
- What does our church do to communicate the big ideas/vision for sharing God's love with others? (for example, in Jacob's faith community: worship, invitational lifestyle, offering Christ to one another through small groups, serving others out of spiritual gifts)
- Do you know the mission and its accompanying practices/big ideas?
 - Are they easy to remember?
- Do our gatherings and meetings repeat, reflect, and communicate our deep values?
 - If not, what would be a good way to start?
- Who are the people with "shining eyes" in our church – the ones who long with empathy to see others know God's love?
 - Do we gather these people (whether they are on committees or not) to dream, pray, and own a vision for what is breaking God's heart in our community?

Food for Thought

Personal discipleship (DNA) can transform a church culture, creating a contagious ethos of intentional discipleship throughout the congregation. It becomes 'our song' and soon everyone sings it – like *Take Me Out to the Ballgame* during the 7TH inning stretch or even a stadium anthem like the 1970s hit, *Sweet Caroline* has become for Boston Red Sox baseball fans at Fenway Park.

Watch a video at the See All The People YouTube playlist:

<https://seeallthepeople.org/class-videos>

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Script & Improv

Every person is called to **first follow God's script** for growing in grace, **then lead others to** a saving experience with **Jesus Christ**. We follow Jesus and share love by both design *and* improvisation. Love makes a personal plan to grow in grace, meet people where they are, and adapt to the realities on the ground. Love also shares the vision and creates a culture of discipleship rooted in a desire to see others connect to God in a saving way through Jesus Christ.

Choose one ministry area in your church and invite those with "shining eyes" to suggest an improvised form of ministry that reaches those outside the walls of the church.

Jesus help me follow and lead others to you. Amen.

Disciples grow and go viral (have a *going* DNA). Intentional, on-purpose discipleship *is* evangelism. So we lead people to Jesus by following Jesus. First Follow, then lead. Be it to make it. Grow and Help. The following *is* leading. And the promise is this: a leader's personal commitment to grow + authentic relationships + an intentional discipleship plan/system (love by design) = vital, healthy, world-changing faith community.

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[illegible]

“[A] relentless focus on making, growing, and maturing disciples... starts by creating an intentional discipleship system or pathway for disciples in your church.”

— JUNIUS B. DOTSON —

Open With Prayer

God help us plan to see (and see to help) the people on your path. Amen.

Set The Stage

Prepare for the group discussion for this session on *Stop Fixing Your Church* by asking participants to consider the following:



THINK of something you're proud of (a milestone or accomplishment) in your own life or in the life of someone you love.

- What kind of preparation and planning made this possible?
- Was there a blueprint, map, or steps you/they followed?
- Did the 'construction' process ever call for changes to the plan (so plan B, C, D, etc.)?
- How did the map or directions match (and get modified by) the reality on the ground?


Recall the plans expectant parents (your own, you, friends) make when a baby is on the way [read books like *What to Expect When You're Expecting*; paint/prepare a nursery; diet/take prenatal vitamins; buy/build a crib; Lamaze classes, throw baby showers/register for gifts, ultrasound/sonogram; social media announcements, schedule a baptism, etc.].

- What did you/your parents/friends do to plan for the arrival of a new family member?
- Did you do it differently the second time?
- Why does love make a plan?
- How can we prepare for the people God is sending our way?

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VIDEO RECAP: *Stop Fixing Your Church*

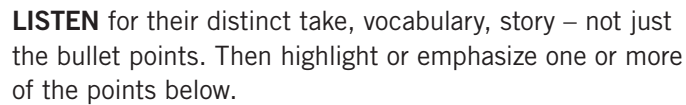
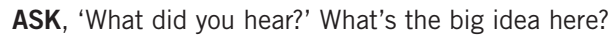
- › Intentional Discipleship is Focused and Designed (Corporate).
- › Stop fixing (churches), start planning (growth opportunities).
- › Stay relentlessly focused on discipleship, love by design (plan, process, people).
- › Bring clarity to what you do (disciple-making) and how you do it (opportunity paths).
- › Remember the 'forgotten why' (Jesus' saving love shared with all).
- › Lead others to Christ, Help them grow, Equip them for ministry, Empower them to tell others.
- › Who you are shapes what you do.
- › Deep discipleship is equipping and empowering others in the journey.
- › Embrace a new ethos and discipleship roadmap beyond surface programming (leader created, context adapted, authentically communicated).
- › Stop fixing: Plan to See the people and your own hearts changed.

-  **WATCH** the video from the film *Evan Almighty*, available on the See All The People YouTube playlist:



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- Intentional Discipleship is Focused and Designed.
- Move from anxious church fixing to a plan for all to grow in grace (discipleship).
- Plan and provide growth opportunities for Jesus followers.
- Cultivate a relentless focus on discipleship and love by design (plan, process, people).
- Bring clarity and focus to *what* we do (disciple-making) and *how* we do it (opportunity paths for growth).
- Remember and rediscover the ‘forgotten *why*’ (Jesus’ saving love shared with all).
- *Lead* others to Christ, *Help* them grow, *Equip* them for ministry, *Empower* them to tell others.
- Remember who you are (witnesses, ambassadors, bridge-builders to Jesus).
- Who you are *shapes* what you do (making disciples).
- The future of deep discipleship is equipping and empowering others on their journey.
- Move beyond surface programming to a new ethos and roadmap for disciple-making (leader created, locally owned, authentically communicated love in a concrete context).
- Make a plan!

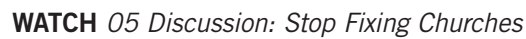
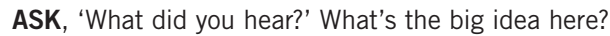


- Do we remember who we are and why we do what we do?
- What is one thing that could shift our focus outward (from our best laid plans to the people God loves)?
- Who has God sent us here to reach?

[illegible]

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[illegible]

- We stop fixing churches when we focus on God's call to love people.
- Authentic love doesn't anxiously try to recreate past church experiences or program its way out of decline.
- Leaders keep focused by seeing the people they are called to reach with open hearts.
- One practical way leaders see is to come alongside those already serving people in the community.
- Going as '*coming alongside*' in strategic partnership with community service providers shifts our focus from 'party planning' to people, changing the DNA and culture of the church.
- Leaders humbly ask 'show us how you serve?' and learn from those already serving with hearts moved by what moves God's heart.
- If you can do one thing to get focused outward, GO - LISTEN – COME ALONGSIDE (to a place where someone is already connecting/seeing/helping the people in your city/community).
- A church planter ethos (with no lawn for hosting) helps churches recognize needs and creates ministries that 'sprout' from the lives of people in the community.
- Leaders find those whose eyes are 'shining' when we preach the gospel of reaching the community.'
- Strategic partners are those who know the stories and songs of their community (*griots*).



- Who is God calling you to see (recognize) and care for (respond) in our community? What are some practical ways you can start to see?

(continued)

- What do you think about a new church start ethos (when you don't have 'a lawn' to host, you have to go where people are)? How would that fly at your church? How do we get ourselves out there so we can see people?
- What would it mean to see our *going* in Jesus' name as *a coming alongside* of those who already see and serve the people in our life and ministry zone?
- List those in your community (not church affiliated) who have 'boots on the ground,' face to face relationships with the people God already knows and loves there. Do they know you support them? Do you ask for their practical wisdom in this helping work?
- Who are the connectors or community "*griots*" in your 'geo-tagged' experience (geo-tagged just means love's work has an address on the map)? Who knows the people and the stories of struggle, love, joy and loss in your longitude/latitude? (*griot* – a French word for West African storytellers – those praise singers and poets who know their hometown and its people well)
- In what ways might this mean *shifting* our *focus* from the old ways of *planning* (vehicles of love/manageable old wineskins) to *engaging* people (new fruit of the vine/Spirit)?

Script & Improv



ASK: Think of a time when your plans prepared you for a situation that required flexibility and on-the-fly ad-libbing.

- What happened?
- What happened next?
- What changed 'on the ground' between your plans and reality?
- How does the concrete reality of life look different from the Google Earth view?
- How do we go from maps and best-laid plans to 'in the zone' encounters/experiences that change lives in real time (maybe a street view faith verses the 2D birds-eye view directions of our best GPS maps)?



LISTEN to their stories for unique experiences, joys, fears, and hopes. Remember the details (they matter).

Future Discussion

Junius and Jacob's conversation turns (or 'pulls focus') from keeping leaders intentional about making disciples to a *tighter focus* on the people God is calling us to love. *Seeing* counters navel-gazing and our anxious 'fixation on fixing' – and it focuses leader efforts on practices that help people grow 'roots deep' in Christ. It places strategic partnerships and relationships with people front and center.

This conversation bridges the current session on making a plan (love by design) to the final session about engaging people through authentic and consistent relationships (love by seeing).

Plan to See

A **new church ethos** or **culture of intentional discipleship** turns the DNA of personal Christ following into a broader shared strategy to love God and neighbor. While there is no one size fits all plan for growth in grace, the key elements or essentials are always there: worship, welcoming hospitality, small group accountability, and service-oriented engagement with people outside and beyond our buildings and facilities.

NOTES



For Further Learning

Jacob Armstrong, *The New Adapters: Shaping Ideas to Fit Your Congregation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2015).



- ## NOTES

Jesus help us love with a plan, and see others grow 'roots deep' in you. Amen.

Disciples make a plan and love by design, ever adapting to reality on the ground. This means making a growth plan for engaging the people God so loves. Yet we move or ‘pull focus’ from inward facing preoccupations to an outward focus on the very people we are called to see and love. Here seeing changes our spiritual DNA, making us people after God’s own heart. For a deeper discipleship rooted in ‘geo-tagged’ faith, seeing becomes spiritual formation and empathy education. And discipleship and evangelism come together in the spiritual practice of recognition, opening our eyes – and our hearts – to what moves the heart of God.

“[To] engage the community with integrity we must see the people that God calls us to reach not as a means to an end [or] a way to increase our capacity to pay our bills or even fill our pews...”

— JUNIUS B. DOTSON —

Open With Prayer

God help us ‘look again’ to see and love those you so love. Amen.

Set The Stage



WATCH a video of comedian Brian Regan discussing his experience with lost baggage at the airport, available on the See All The People YouTube playlist:

<https://seeallthepeople.org/class-videos>



ASK/LISTEN

- What are the “essentials”?
 - In life (food, shelter, love...relationships)?
 - In our strongest relationships?
(HINT: honesty, authenticity, commitment, compassion, consistency, mercy, forgiveness, time spent together)
 - In discipleship and ministry?
- What are some of the essentials for seeing the people God has placed in our path?
(HINT: paying attention, ‘listening love,’ learning their origin story [all heroes have an origin story], understanding their situation: context, culture, history, losses, joys)
- Name some obstacles to seeing and recognizing people where they live (for example, our busyness and preoccupation with our own problems, presumptions about who they are, where they come from, what happened to them, etc.).
 - What would it take to remove some of these obstacles to seeing in your church?

VIDEO RECAP: *Discipleship Begins with Relationship*

- › Intentional Discipleship is Relational and Engaging.
- › Building Relationships and Engaging your community is part of the plan.
- › See to plan, plan to see.
- › ‘Roots deep,’ Christ-following faith stirs a desire to see others experience life in Jesus, too.
- › The closer we grow to Christ, the more our hearts yearn for “the vast and endless sea” (Life for others).
- › Leaders equip and empower disciples to engage and connect with people.
- › Sharing God’s love is our “why,” relationships our “how.”
- › Seeing is recognizing, respecting, and responding to another’s life.
- › Recognition grounds engagement (*sawabona – I see you*).
- › A plan to love by seeing is most effective when relationships are authentic, organic, and consistent.
- › God draws near/changes us through the others we see.
- › Effective ministry marries outreach and intentional discipleship.

Called to See



"In the beginning is the relation."

- Martin Buber

NOTES



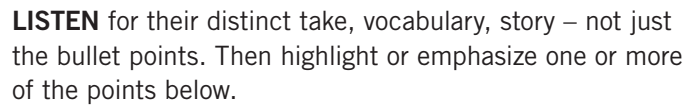
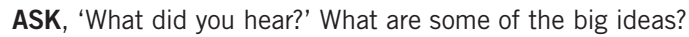
- What (or who) is she singing about?
- What's the significance of the line, *'find out what it means to me'*?

[illegible]

- Think of a person you met and through deeper conversation discovered something no one would have guessed about their life and ‘backstory.’
 - How long did it take you to find out what happened to them (hours, days, weeks, months, years)?
 - What made them comfortable enough to trust you with their story?
 - Did you listen without presuppositions?
 - Why is it hard to suspend judgment, ask open-ended questions, and just let people tell us who they are?
 - How might a greater competence for listening to stories help us understand our own?

- Encourage someone in the group to find Humans of New York on Instagram (humansofnfy) or at humansofnewyork.com. Have them select and share a picture, reading aloud the accompanying self-reported backstory of the person featured (preview before reading!).
 - How does this photographer (Brandon Stanton) see the people he photographs?
 - Why is their story important to his seeing?

Running in the Background



- Intentional Discipleship is Relational and Engaging.
- Building Relationships and Engaging your Community is part of your plan (IDS) .
- See to plan, Plan to see.
- ‘Roots deep,’ Christ-following faith stirs a desire to see others experience life in Jesus, too.
- The closer we grow to Jesus, the more our hearts yearn for “the vast and endless sea” (God’s saving love for others).
- Leaders equip and empower disciples to engage and connect with people (see, participate, acknowledge, engage).
- Love’s learning curve invites *seeing* and teaches *empathy* (love wants the good life for others).
- Sharing God’s love is our “why,” relationships our “how.”
- *Seeing* is recognizing, respecting, *and* responding to the altar call that is another’s life.
- Recognition grounds engagement (*sawabona – I see you*).
- Our plan to love by seeing is most effective when relationships are authentic, organic, and consistent.
- God is already working in the lives of those we see – and changing us through our relationships with them.
- God draws near when we make ourselves available and vulnerable to others.
- Effective ministry marries outreach and intentional discipleship.

- How does our church build relationships and engage people in the community?
- What authentic, organic, and consistent opportunities for conversation already exist?
- Do outreach and discipleship come together/overlap in our ministries?
- Where is love teaching us empathy (to have a burden for those God places in our path)?

[illegible]



ASK/LISTEN (choose one or two)

- Think back to a vulnerable time in your pre-adult life (childhood, high school). Did anyone say or embody “I see you” (sawabona)?
 - How?
 - Did it affect the course of your life?
 - How were they God’s grace to you?
- Who sees you now (really recognizes/appreciates/respects you, like Aretha so soulfully commands)?
- Who needs to be seen by you?
- What does it mean to ‘have a burden’ for others?
- Think of someone right now whose hurt breaks God’s heart or your heart. What can you do about it (listen, help)?
- Have you ever served others only to discover they were actually helping you?
- What would it mean to ‘marry intentional discipleship with outreach’ in your church?

Plan To Grow/Plan To Help

Invite some of the people in your group with “shining eyes” for reaching the community to **go on a ‘prayer walk’** with you in the area surrounding your church. Pray for people and places by address. Pick a restaurant, school, business, neighborhood market/grocery store and take a picture of it with your phone from the street. Pray for the people who work, learn, or shop there. Maybe go to a restaurant for lunch or coffee. Talk to your server. Listen (naturally, without being interrogating or creepy!) and ask them questions that give them an opportunity to be seen. This is not a transaction-don’t expect to ‘get’ something out of your conversation. Later send a note or text yourself the street view picture outside with a reminder to pray for the person you listened to inside (see Junius B. Dotson, *Engaging Your Community: A Guide to Seeing All the People*, p.41ff, available at www.SeeAllThePeople.org).

NOTE: Links to YouTube videos in this study guide are not owned by Discipleship Ministries. YouTube videos can be deleted by their copyright owners at any time after publish date of this study guide.

See to Love

Rita: *It’s a perfect day. You couldn’t plan a day like this.*

Phil: *Well, you can, it just takes an awful lot of work.*

Watch the preview trailer (or send a link in advance) for the film, *Groundhog Day*: [\[hyperlink\]](#)

Note the quote above. If some in your group have seen the film, ask:

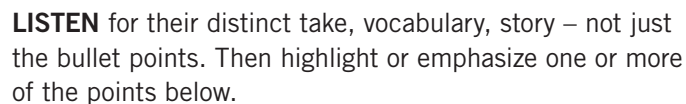
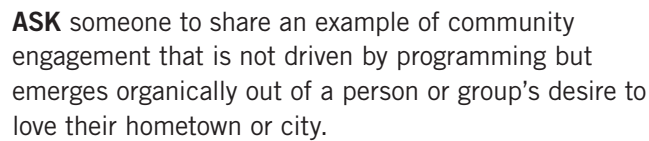
- How (and why) does the self-serving weatherman Phil Connors make it a priority to learn all about his producer, Rita?
- Even when he knows all about her, does he really see her?
- What breaks the cycle of unending repetition – living the same day again and again?

[HINT- He begins to recognize, respect, and respond to the dignity of every person, helping them where they are and without need for reward (vs. managing outcomes for his own designs)]

How can you break the church cycle of doing the same thing over and over (expecting different results)? One way: *paying* attention to the people in your community.

NOTES

Called to See



- Discipleship begins with relationship.
- Community impacting ministry marries outreach to intentional discipleship-beyond projects/programs to a shared way of life (small groups loving people in their zip code).
- Small groups = building blocks for missional engagement (journeying together and building relationships in the community).
- Relational/missional discipleship is authentic organic, and consistent (not a hidden agenda, one-off transaction).
- Authentic connections and relationships begin with listening and sharing stories.
- Community engagement happens through consistent personal connections with people in places we already live, learn, work, and play.
- Corporate engagement often means retooling ministries to deepen relationships and create partnerships with those already caring for this community.
- We always connect engagement with the vision (God's love remaking us/sending us to help).
- Leaders help the church care across time by inspiring a Christlike desire to actually see the people-especially those on the margins.
- Leaders connect with people through a missionary mindset that asks: Who are the people? What is this place? What does it look like to follow Jesus in this city/community (at this time)?
- This heart and mindset prays/invites God's help to learn how to love those who aren't connected to a faith community.

"Absolute attention is prayer."

– Simone Weil

NOTES



ASK/LISTEN (choose one or two)

- How does outreach work in your church (a specific committee, program, or staff member's direction, etc.)?
 - Do ministries spring up from discipleship groups or spiritual entrepreneurs in your church?
- What do Junius and Jacob mean by "authentic, organic, and consistent" when describing relationships with people in the community?
 - What are some examples of inauthentic, unnatural, or sporadic engagement (some forms of 'witnessing,' tract distributing, hit and run evangelism, even annual holiday meal serving with homeless folks, etc.)?
- What stories did you hear Junius and Jacob share?
 - Recall an example of a relationship that yielded a sacred opportunity to see and help. What role did conversation play?
- How might this resonate with what John Wesley called the 'holiness of conversation'?
- How could we shift our outreach efforts from a programmatic to a partnership model?

Called to See

"Listening love is the first step to justice in person-to-person relationships."

– Paul Tillich

NOTES

Plan To Grow/Plan To Help

Typecasting a City: New York Alleys

Invite someone to listen in advance to a 12-minute opening segment of a podcast about the cinematic stereotype of a New York alley and share this story in their own words with the group:

Cortlandt Alley, 99% Invisible, Mini Stories: Volume 6:

<https://bit.ly/2Syf1IH>

Quotes:

"People think they know it but they don't...At some point the idea of New York has taken over the reality of New York...like an actor that's typecast."

"Movies are just so much more interesting when you portray the locations featured for what they are and let them be a real character instead of just a backdrop."

(continued)



ASK:

- Do we treat our surrounding community as a backdrop for our on-site church activities?
- What do we think we know about the people living near our church?
- Is it based on real conversations and relationships or our own 'Cortlandt Alley' assumptions about who/where they are, what they want, how they live/work, etc.?
- How do 'stereotyped' views of different areas of our community get in the way of hearing the unique ways God's grace has been at work in the people living in those places?

For images, see "This is the Most Filmed Alley in NYC": <https://bit.ly/2T4hyzs>

Called to See

"I wanted life and I wanted the abundant life. I wanted it for others too."

– Dorothy Day

NOTES

Script & Improv



ASK: Name someone you would take off work or clear your calendar for without hesitation. Or think of a time when you cancelled or rescheduled plans so you could be with someone important to you.

- Who made you change your calendar?
- Why did they rise to the top of your to-do list?



LISTEN to their stories for unique experiences, joys, fears, and hopes. Remember the details (they matter).



SAY (*in your own words*):

Jesus followed a script for God's faithfulness to heal, help, and rescue – a script rooted in the faith of Israel and YHWH's promise to save and provide. But he also improvised on the fly, turning over tables, upsetting conventions, and remaking cherished customs so that all in his path – even the untouchable – might experience God's life-changing love

Love with a plan is more like trimming sails than rubbing lamps: we catch the Holy Spirit's wind and it sends us where it will – always to those who need us. So trim your sails, make a plan to see people, and let that plan be modified by strategic partnerships, actual conversations,



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[illegible]

- *See all the People* is a movement, not a program (no short cuts or checklists).
- Adapt it to your context/locality.
- If it feels challenging or even impossible, you are on the right track (pray and get to work!).

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