

Commissions
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Luke 24:36-53

Opening: Do you use a “to do” list? It’s a simple way to keep up with what you need to do. A “prioritized” task list makes it a powerful way to do the most important things first and, perhaps let go of less important ideas. In the 20th century, credit for the prioritized task list method goes to a man named Ivy Lee.

In 1918, Charles Schwab, President of Bethlehem Steel turned to this productivity consultant Ivy Lee to help him improve productivity at his business.

As the story goes, Lee met with all Schwab’s key executives for about 15 minutes each giving them a simple plan for a daily task list [see footnotes for how it worked.]ⁱ After three months, Schwab was so pleased with the improved productivity he wrote Ivy Lee a check for \$25,000 (\$400,000 today.)

Task Lists go way back before Ivy Lee. Just look at Genesis chapter one. What were the first tasks God gave to Adam? (Gen. 1:28) What was the first “DON’T DO?” (*“I only gave you one thing NOT to do, Adam!”*) What are other examples of “task lists” God gave His people in Genesis (Noah, Abram?) Then there’s Moses; what is the granddaddy of all scriptural task lists God gave him?

Sometimes before they go on a trip people leave a task list for others to complete (water the plants, etc.) People SHOULD leave instructions about their affairs and wishes before they die. Some people who know they are dying will sit and tell their family important things to remember when they are no longer on the scene.

Jesus gave His followers lots of specific instructions (commands) and said if we love Him we’ll follow them. The first (greatest) and second (like it) were to LOVE GOD and LOVE OTHERS. We might call Jesus’ commands in the gospels “The Disciple’s To Do List.” To be a good disciple follow His commands. Jesus final instructions before ascending back to Heaven focused on sharing the good news of the gospel with everyone we can. This is known as the “Great

Commission.” For our purposes, let’s think of them as “The Disciple MAKER’s To Do List.”

The truth that should change us: Jesus left a “to do” list for sharing the good news of the gospel. Every follower of Christ can complete that “task list” using our unique gifts because we are “clothed with” the power of His Holy Spirit.

- In verses 35-44 we read about another post-resurrection appearance of Jesus to His disciples. The men from Emmaus were telling the eleven remaining disciples about their experience when suddenly Jesus appeared in the locked room. They were scared. He said, “be calm.”
- He showed them the marks of the crucifixion on His glorified body.
- He said, “Touch me and you’ll see I’m not a ghost. Better yet, do you guys have anything to eat around here? I’ll have the broiled fish special.”
- As Jesus ate, they watched, “*filled with joy and wonder (v.41.)*”
- Let’s pick up the conversation beginning with Jesus’ words in verse 44.
- As we go verse by verse we will see Luke’s account of the “Disciple Maker’s To Do List” directly from Jesus to them (and us.)

Luke 24:44–53 (ESV) — 44 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” **45** Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

- The first item on the “Disciple Maker’s To Do List” is to understand what the scriptures say about Jesus and what He said about Himself and us.
- If we’ll study our Bible, He promised to “open our minds” to understand it.
- Next, Jesus summarized what He had been telling them about Himself:

46 and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,

- Item two on the “DMTDL”: Build your faith on the truth of the atonement and the resurrection. Remember our question: Why did Jesus have to die?
- We’ve discussed the atonement. A Holy God cannot tolerate evil so evil must be destroyed. Unfortunately, evil resides in people so to destroy evil God the Father would have to destroy US! To avoid that He sent Jesus to die as the sacrifice in our place. To “atone” for the sin of people.
- In a “transaction” known as the “great exchange” Jesus took our sin and gave us His righteousness if we will trust Him as Savior and Lord.
- When the Father looks at a Christ-follower He sees Christ’s righteousness like a “robe” covering our sin nature.
- We thank God for the atonement. Why is the resurrection essential?
- That “substitutionary” atonement pays for our sin but we only have eternal life after we die because Jesus rose from the dead.
- Jesus appeared to over 500 people in 40 days leaving lots of historical evidence of His resurrection. The most compelling fact is that His disciples were willing to DIE based on seeing Him resurrected.
- Item two: Build your faith on the truth of the atonement and resurrection.
- We need to be able to explain the importance of both those topics.
- Item three on the “DMTDL” is in verse 47:

47 and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

- If you share the gospel using only John 3:16 what might be missed about how salvation works? How do people “trip up” on “whoever believes?”

- Item three: We must proclaim the good news of the gospel but never leave out repentance and the forgiveness of sins.
- Fill in the blank: Repentance is a change of _____ followed by a change in _____.
- One commentator summarizes: *“Repentance and faith can be understood as two sides of the same coin. It is impossible to place your faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior without first changing your mind about your sin and about who Jesus is and what He has done. Whether it is repentance from willful rejection or repentance from ignorance or disinterest, it is a change of mind. Biblical repentance, in relation to salvation, is changing your mind from rejection of Christ to faith in Christ.”ⁱⁱ*
- Jesus words, *“In his name”* are important. Jesus is the only way to eternal life because of what He did on the cross and because of His empty tomb.

48 You are witnesses of these things.

- In a court case, why does a witness NOT have to have legal training?
- Item four: Share what Jesus has done for YOU and explain with scripture how He will do it for others. Why is the last part important?
- Wiersbe: *“As Christians, we are not judges or prosecuting attorneys sent to condemn the world. We are witnesses who point to Jesus Christ and tell lost sinners how to be saved.”ⁱⁱⁱ*
- That sounds pretty simple but we all know that sharing our story and the gospel can be intimidating. Jesus knew it would be. Look at verse 49:

49 And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

- *“...[S]tay in the city until...”* was specifically for those disciples at that time. Why do Christ-followers not have to “wait” for the Holy Spirit?
- Item five: *“You are clothed with power from on high,”* depend on that!

- Wiersbe again: *“How could a group of common people ever hope to fulfill that kind of a commission? God promised to provide the power (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8), and He did.”^{iv}*
“Witnessing is not something that we do for the Lord; it is something that He does through us, if we are filled with the Holy Spirit. There is a great difference between a “sales talk” and a Spirit-empowered witness. “People do not come to Christ at the end of an argument,” said Vance Havner.”^v
- Christ-followers possess the power of the Holy Spirit to share the gospel.
- As we round out our “to do” list for disciple making, we look to Matthew’s account of Jesus’ “Great Commission.” Matthew added that we are to make disciples of *“all nations,” baptizing them...and..teaching*” them to observe all Jesus that commanded.^{vi}

50 And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. **51** While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. **52** And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, **53** and were continually in the temple blessing God.

- Our final to do list item for disciple making in Luke 24 comes from the example of these disciples after Jesus left to ascend to Heaven.
- Item six: Worship God “continuously” with “great joy.”
- Evidence of “great joy” in the life of a Christ-follower makes people attracted to what we have in Christ. It makes them say: *“I want THAT!”*
- That “great joy” comes from the overflow of continual worship.

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- Scripture is filled with “task lists” that help Christ-followers live life in Him.
- In Jesus’ final words before ascending to Heaven, He gave us a specific “to do” list for making disciples. Every follower of Christ can complete that “task list” because we are “clothed with” the power of His Holy Spirit.
- Let’s summarize the “Disciple Maker’s To Do List”:

1. Study to understand what the scriptures say about Jesus, what He said about Himself, and about us. He has promised to open our minds.
2. Build your faith on the truth of the atonement and the resurrection.
3. Proclaim the good news including repentance and forgiveness of sins.
4. Share what Jesus has done for YOU and explain with scripture how He will do it for others.
5. “You are clothed with power from on high,” depend on it as you share!
6. Worship God “continuously” with “great joy” and others will want what you have in Christ!

ⁱ Ivy Lee’s Method:

1. At the end of each work day, write down the six most important things you need to accomplish tomorrow. Do not write down more than six tasks.
2. Prioritize those six items in order of their true importance.
3. When you arrive tomorrow, concentrate only on the first task. Work until the first task is finished before moving on to the second task.
4. Approach the rest of your list in the same fashion. At the end of the day, move any unfinished items to a new list of six tasks for the following day.
5. Repeat this process every working day.

The strategy sounded simple, but Schwab and his executive team at Bethlehem Steel gave it a try. After three months, Schwab was so delighted with the progress his company had made that he called Lee into his office and wrote him a check for \$25,000. A \$25,000 check written in 1918 is the equivalent of a \$400,000 check in 2015. <https://jamesclear.com/ivy-lee>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.gotquestions.org/repentance.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [*The Bible exposition commentary*](#) (Vol. 1, p. 280). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

^{iv} Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [*The Bible exposition commentary*](#) (Vol. 1, p. 280). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

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^{vi} [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Mt 28:19–20). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.