

Weekly Action Plan

I often describe “discipleship” as the process of learning to: **Think, Feel and Act** like Jesus. Practically speaking that means, we should always want to see and understand the world from God’s perspective (*think*), likewise we want to celebrate the things that God loves and despair over the things that God does (*feel*). The end goal of lining up our heads and hearts with God is that we would do as Jesus would do in any given situation (*Act*).

I assume that like me, you regularly find that your thinking, feeling and actions are out of tune with Gods. One of the obstacles for us is that American values sometimes are out of tune with Gods. Consider the three words we looked at this week in Ephesians 3:1-13: **Mystery, Community and Prisoner**. Each of these words conflict with some of our core cultural ideals.

God’s ways are often **MYSTERIOUS**, we value **PREDICTABILITY**.
God made us for **COMMUNITY**, we value **INDIVIDUALITY**.
God made us to live under His authority (Paul’s term **PRISONER**) we value **PERSONAL FREEDOM**.

Overheard:

“The value we place on something determines the hardship we are willing to endure for it” -NIV Application Commentary pg.171


These are examples of the conflict in values we can face. Until we truly value the things God does, it will be difficult to enjoy living the faithful lives God designed for us to live. I’d encourage you this week to consider how you can grow in your appreciation for the *mysterious* ways that God can work, how you can adjust to make God’s *community* (the church) a bigger part of your life and to explore what it means

to give God more authority (consider yourself God’s “prisoner”) in your life. Below are some exercises that may help.

Talk it out: Make some time to sit down at a kitchen table, or at a coffee shop, and explore with someone some of the topics we talked about on Sunday.

- Can you think of a season of difficulty in your life where you where frustrated because you couldn’t understand how God was using the experience for anything good, only to discover later the good work that He was doing?
- What are some correlations between God’s design for the nuclear family and the Church body?
- How has the family you grew up with impacted your ideas and the value you place on your Church family?
- What is your reaction to Paul calling himself a “prisoner of Christ Jesus” in Ephesians 3:1? How would you characterize your relational standing to Jesus?

Seriously? Is it possible that after years in prison Paul could still smile?



Reading his letter it is difficult to see that Paul isn’t absolutely confident that he is exactly where God wants him. Smiling or not, clearly Paul is at peace about his current situation.

Pray it in: Make some time this week to pray. “God help me to have a deeper appreciation for the journey that you are leading me on. I confess that at times it is difficult to trust you in seasons of uncertainty. I thank you for the many good things that you have allowed me to experienced from being part of your family and the opportunities I have had to be a blessing to others in it. Just like Paul prayed we give you thanks that because of the work Jesus did we can approach you with freedom and confidence in all things!”

Store it up: Committing verses to memory is a key way to hold on to the truths of God. Here is a great one for this week: “*In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.*” - Ephesians 3:12.

Have a great thanksgiving this week! It’s a privilege for me and my family to call Sierra our church. -Noah

How Americans Responded to the question, “What is the most important part of Thanksgiving?”

How about you?

