



Building Wholehearted Disciples of Jesus

**The Wholeheart Disciple
Starting Points 1**

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Series: Outlier University

The Wholehearted Disciple—Starting Points 1 Outlier University 101

The Scatter-Plot Church

- All of you who have taken Psychology 101 or “Psycho 101,” which my friends and I called it, then you know about a “Scatter-Plot Diagram” which diagrams a particular study being done.
- The dots on the diagram represent an individual and each X and Y axis represent some variable: weight in relation to height; success in relation to finances; etc...
- The dots tend to stack up together into what looks like a wave and you get all excited because you can see a trend happening. And in college you get an A by noticing trends and statistical averages.
- But in every survey or study you have, there is one lone dot that’s way off the grid, above the curve.
- We term this dot, this individual an “outlier.”
- It does not fit, it is not average. But, it is no problem because you just delete it. It is clearly a measurement error because it is messing up the data.
- One of the first things you learn to do in Psycho 101 is what your professors call “cleaning up the data.” If you are trying to understand the general trend of what you are researching, then outliers mess up your findings.
- But I am intrigued by outliers because something clearly is happening here that very few researchers ever look at. I will use Shawn Achor’s term, from his book “The Happiness Advantage.” He terms it “the cult of the average”. He writes, “Conventional Psychology consciously ignores outliers because they don’t fit the pattern...Instead of ignoring the outliers I want to learn from them” (p. 10)

- Outliers change things. Outliers are crazy enough to think that they can change the world and often they do.
- Jesus was an outlier.
- The church today is a “scatter-plot church” with a fixation on the cult of the average. We have a western American Christianity that produces people that do not look any different from the world, who are as bent on the American dream as anyone else, and have forgotten that becoming a Jesus disciple is the most electrifying, wholehearted, crazy, maverick, uncomfortable, joyful, passionate, out of the ordinary thing you could ever do. In other words it is an “outlier.”
- You are an outlier because when you choose to follow Jesus, you are following the most creative, happy, joyful, powerful, humble outlier the world has ever known.
- And He is in the business of reproducing Himself in us! Wow!
- He even said that the miracles and works that He did, we will be able to do.

Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.” John 14:12

- Even His love is within us and can shine through us.

Jesus also said, “And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it*, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” John 17:26

At The Road we are not building average Christians but an Outlier, wholehearted, all in, burn the boats disciples of Jesus.

- For the next 7 weeks I want to talk about how to be an outlier disciple, how to be a wholehearted, all in disciple.

- These are just the “Starting Points.” Like the foundations of the house and how we can build on solid ground, not quick sand.
- For example, I have added onto my house in Black Forest three times and in the case of two expansions, we have had to lay new foundations. The foundations took the most time.
- Let’s begin with Jesus!

Jesus Outlier

Jesus is one of the most iconic, controversial outliers in all of human history. No one has ever changed the world like Him. No one has built a movement of love and truth like Jesus.

The Apostle John gives us one of the best descriptions of Jesus in all of scripture in just one verse.

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

- The combination of truth and love is one of the most counterintuitive combinations in Jesus’ life.
- Let’s begin with His loving grace:
In His time and even today, people rejected and shamed those who held beliefs or practices that they felt were immoral. But Jesus astonished everyone by being willing to eat with tax collectors. These were men who ripped off their own people through extortion, graft, and money laundering, and who collaborated with the hated Roman imperial forces.
- This outraged the political “left”, the Sadducees. They were zealous for justice against oppression and injustice.

- But Jesus also angered the political “right”, the Pharisees, because he hung out with and even welcomed and loved the immoral—prostitutes.
- He touched lepers, people who were considered physically and ceremonially unclean.
- But then He ate with the Pharisees, showing grace and love even toward the bigoted.
- But Jesus was also insistent on bearing witness to truth. Zacchaeus, the despised tax collector, was stunned by Jesus’ love and embraced Him. Then, Jesus called him to repent and he did! He shut down his government extortion racket.
- When Jesus encounters women who were considered sexually immoral by society, He engaged them with a respect and graciousness that unsettled the religious conservatives, yet he gently points out to the Samaritan woman her wrecked relationships with all the men she has encountered and leads her to salvation.
- In the famous account of the woman caught in adultery, Jesus says to her: “I don’t condemn you but go now and quit your life of sin.”
- It is brilliant!! It is counterintuitive. Jesus outlier—outside of the religious and political system. The perfect counterintuitive of grace and truth.

Timothy Keller writes **“Jesus turned the dominant social pattern on its head. He freely ate with the moral and social outcasts. He welcomed and befriended the impure and called them to follow him. Jesus did not fear that they would contaminate him; rather, he expected that his wholesome love would infect and change them, and again and again, this is what happened.”** (*Making Sense of God* p. 234)

Do you want to follow this outlaw?
Do you want to become a disciple of this outlier?

Mark 2:13-17

13Then He went out again by the sea; and all the multitude came to Him, and He taught them. 14 As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him. 15Now it happened, as He was dining in Levi's house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. 16 And the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, "How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?" 17When Jesus heard it, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not call the righteous, but the sinners, to repentance."

It all starts here. What will you do with Jesus? Jesus gave and still gives a simple statement, the statement that has radically changed the lives of billions of people: "Follow Me."

1) Jesus takes the Initiative!

- This is the Jesus' way—He initiates His love toward us!
- Jesus is cruising by and notices Levi, a tax collector, a man who collaborated with the Romans, turning in his own people, and overcharging them in order to get a kick back.
- The God of the Bible always initiates in His love for us.
- The Bible story of man is that we were "created in the image and likeness of God, male and female." God created you and me **IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF HIMSELF.**

- It means God initiated in your creation too.

Psalm 139:13-16

*13 For You formed my inward parts;
You covered me in my mother's womb.
14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;^[b]
Marvelous are Your works,
And that my soul knows very well.
15 My frame was not hidden from You,
When I was made in secret,
And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.
And in Your book they all were written,
The days fashioned for me,
When as yet there were none of them.*

- You are loved; you are beloved; you are special to God.
- God is always inviting us; initiating. Jesus is reaching out to Levi, to Peter, to sinners saying “Come and follow Me.” The direction is God toward us, while we are sinners.

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- This is always the starting point—it starts with God loving us first.
- The Bible says that God has loved us with an “everlasting love.”

- The Bible says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”
 - You cannot earn it.
 - You will never be good enough to deserve it.
 - You will never be moral or ethical enough but you can be bad enough.
 - Yet Jesus calls you by name—He knows your name.

- The Bible says:

⁹In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
(1 John 4:9-10)

- The whole Bible is about God calling men and women to Himself.
- God chose Moses, Abraham, Sarah, David. God chose Levi, Peter, Paul and guess what? God chose you! You are His beloved child.
- God is always choosing people! Choosing them for a relationship.
 - Jesus wants to be a friend. He said you are no longer slaves but his friends.
 - Jesus wants you to experience His love.
 - Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his **friends**.”

- Jesus said, “You are My **friends** if you do whatever I command you.”
- “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you **friends**, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.”

First, Jesus initiated with His love, but then He says, “Follow Me.”

2) Jesus says Follow Me. Jesus chooses you to follow Him.

- Not a political party—not to be a Pharisee or Sadducee, Republican or Democrat.
- Not a religion—not to be a Catholic, Lutheran, or Pentecostal.
- Not a list of do’s and don’ts, goods and bads.
- Not a church.
- Jesus said Follow Me! Follow Jesus! Will you follow Jesus?
 - For example, too many of us are locked into labels and we identify ourselves more based on a church denomination or political party. Jesus simply said “Follow Me.”
 - I have the Moravian saying, posted in my office “In essentials Unity, In non-essentials Liberty, In all things Love.”
 - Jesus is the essential!

- Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” To follow Jesus is to follow the Jesus Way, the Jesus Truth, the Jesus Life.
- Jesus offers new life!
 - Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.”
 - The Bible says, “In Him was **life**, and the **life** was the light of men.”
 - Jesus says, “For as the Father raises the dead and gives **life** to *them*, even so the Son gives **life** to whom He will.”
- It is the restoration of Eden! The restoration of the image of God within us when we say yes to Jesus.
- Jesus gives us new life, new hope, new purpose, new joy.
- The first step to new life; the first step to joy; the first step to a new direction; the first step to real love, the first step to being truly wholehearted, all in, as a human being, is to choose Jesus.

3) Jesus has chosen you for a purpose, a job to do.

- In another occasion Jesus say, “Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.”
- You are chosen by God to realize your purpose. God created you for a task, for a job to do, than no one can do but you.
- You cannot do it. Jesus changes you for the purpose He has for you.
 - Listen, this is important, you cannot change you, but God can.

- This is the Creator God who said of your creation that “it was good” and then again said, “you are marvelous.”
 - You are returning to your original “image and likeness of God.”
- Levi left his tax office and followed Jesus and was transformed forever but not overnight.
 - Mary Magdalene repented, followed Jesus, and had 7 demons cast out of her. She is mentioned 12 times the gospels, more than most of the apostles. She was the first woman at the tomb on the morning of Jesus resurrection.
 - Peter was an impetuous loud mouth who was transformed for the purpose of the taking the gospel to the Jews.
 - Paul hated the Church, hated Jesus and was transformed by Jesus.
 - There is a purpose for your life! Did you know that?
 - God chooses sinners, bad sinners, non-smart people, ordinary people, messed up people to carry His power and love to the world.
 - The Bible says,
 - “But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty.”***
 - 1Corinthians 1:27**

- ***For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10***
- **Next week I want to talk about being His workmanship.**