

Michelle Montenegro | Season 1 Episode 7

Jesus in Isolation

Michelle: Cause it's easy for me to think that the government drove me into isolation or virus. The virus drove me into isolation, but my question has been. Did the spirit lead me here for something

Josh: you're listening to Sonlife's disciple-making podcast. As we looked at Jesus as our model for life and ministry. My name is Josh shades. And I'm your co-host along with Doug holiday. Sonlife's executive director. No, we desire to see everyday disciple makers be encouraged and equipped to be a disciple that makes a disciple.

Welcome again to another everyday disciple makers podcast.

And we're in the heat of summer and getting geared up for school to start. Some schools have already. Got launched. Back to school, some of the schools started and had to get shut down. Some are going hybrid. Some are going a hundred percent online. It's a very unique season to try to navigate , things starting up or not starting when they're starting.

So I don't know, Doug, how are you holding up with all of this stop and start? When school coming back, how does it impact your family?

Doug: Now with three daughters in college and two in high school, it's a little bit different all the way around. We've got two girls who just started back to school, high school today, and they're actually on campus and, you know, masked up for the experience.

So we'll see, we'll see what they have to report about that dropped off a daughter, uh, up. Up at school in long Island York. And supposedly they're going to be having classes on campus. We'll see if that actually happens once the school officially starts here after labor day for them. Daughter, that's going to university of Florida and she'll have back this coming weekend.

And, uh, some of her classes are going to be online and some are going to be in person. And, you know, it's just kind of. Yeah. See how it goes. How about, about for your kids, Josh?

Josh: Yeah, our kids, we start after labor day, but it looks like everything's going to be online, at least for the first nine weeks and then they'll have different hybrid models.

So one of the things we're doing is we decided with a couple of network of families and some. Uh, students that our kids have gotten to know and kind of creating what called family pods , or parent pods and so we're going to take the online classes together and having kind of, um, a little of a learning group together and trying to learn that way.

So it's still yet to be determined .The other day I was at hobby lobby and I loved their position on all of this. They just skipped all of the whole entire fall decor and they didn't want straight to Christmas. Uh, so all the store is filled with Christmas decor. So, uh, I love that, uh, walked in and smiles that focus on Jesus.

There you go. Uh, and let's just keep moving on and this get 2020 behind us. And, uh, what an incredible year has been.

Doug: Yeah, they should have focused on new years. Let's get it out of 20, 20. Oh, you know, Josh, now's the time of year here in summer toward the end of summer when. We encourage everyone on our Sonlife staff or Sonlife team to take their APR, their annual planning retreat to get away for, for at least three days and prayer reflection, planning.

And I mean, they're in Oregon. You have such amazing options for you for an APR. I mean, you've got the mountains, you've got the ocean. Uh, where did you end up going for your APR this

Josh: year? Yes, I've done some incredible places. I've gotten, uh, Airbnb on the mountain. I've gone to the coast. Uh, this year I found one on a farm, a working farm as 120 year old little one room cottage, literally in the middle of the farm as the barns all around me and, uh, was a, one was affordable.

Uh, to have property back behind it that had a, like a, a stream. And so I just took my camping chair. Down into the stream and plot my feet in there and cooled off in the heat of the summer. And I couldn't complain with the, uh, uh, the owls screeching screech owl is around me, a bald Eagle soaring around the top and the fish and the water.

And, uh, just incredible times to think, reflect, pray.

Doug: Any cows on this farm? Uh, there

Josh: was no cows on this farm. No. Um,

Doug: by that the dreaming about the move meant

Josh: you get a milk, that one for all it's worth. Right. Um, but yeah, our annual planning retreat is something that we in Sonlife, we're the committed to looking at Jesus.

How did he isolate himself from the distractions and the things around us? To pause and to listen to the voice of the father and to do what he says and to obey, um, to the commands of Jesus and to look at that. And so it's something that we've practiced for four years and it's something that's come out a rhythm that we say, okay, what is God doing?

And what are those goals? And where are you? Where are you? Where are you moving to this next year? I know you just came off of yours. We currently have staff on there's this week. Some came off on some flew to death Valley. I don't know why they would, I guess they. Took Jesus in the wilderness, literally.

And they flew and spent time the death Valley, a dog, he just came off of yours. And you,

Doug: yeah, so I was at the beach, the beach, so, and I didn't intend to make all the rest of the team jealous when I sent pictures to everyone of the glorious. Sunrise on the Florida coast, but it was, it was spectacular. And I tell you, Jay, you know, prayer and reflection in the morning watching the sunrise is a it's a Holy moment, uh, filled my soul.

That's awesome.

Josh: Well, that ties into where we're going. Today's podcast. We have Michelle Montenegro. Uh, she is a, a, a disciple of Mark Edwards and I'm looking forward to having her heart, uh, her ministry, her passion for Jesus is just infectious. And, uh, so she's been thinking a lot about this Jesus and isolation, and she's going to come from Costa Rica.

So she's been serving in Costa Rica. Serves on the singular ministry team. And so take a listen to today's interview with Michelle Montenegro.

Welcome to another episode of that everyday disciple-making podcast with us today, we have Michelle Montenegro coming in from Costa Rica and coming in from beautiful sunny Orlando, Florida. So there are these podcasts that we set up. We get going, get ready to invite somebody. And Michelle was one of the first on our list and we've been chasing her down and finally got her on Skype.

And I'm, I'm super thrilled today to have you join us. So Michelle, before we get started, um, the middle of backstory is I, I first met you. When you were an

intern, um, summer intern with, with Mark Edwards, who was overseeing Sonlife Latin America. So now we're have a disciple who's making disciples. So I even love that disciple-making process then too, to hear that movement making in Latin America and now kind of your ministry.

With singular. So I am super thrilled, a long history of seeing impact faithfulness making disciples. And so when Michelle what'd you do, please just introduce a little more yourself and kind of your story with Sonlife and disciple-making.

Michelle: Yes. Thank you so much. I'm just so grateful and so excited to be doing life and ministry in Latin America with my husband and Lisandro and our two kids.

But Judah is 10. Chloe is eight and I'm actually originally from Valparaiso, Indiana. So the home of Orville Redenbacher for any popcorn lovers who are listening, I moved to Costa Rica right out of college, and it was for two years. And for two years, I moved to Costa Rica to learn Spanish. And I ended up learning so much more.

That was actually 22 years ago. So this is kind of a milestone of half of my life in Latin America. And I get asked all the time, you know, how in the world are you still in Costa Rica after all this time? And I have to attribute it to moving to Costa Rica and right away becoming part of a, what was a very small team of Sonlife Latin America at that time.

And I began to be personally discipled and trained in disciple-making like Jesus, by Mark Edwards. He was my team leader at the time, my, my modern rabbi and you know, to this day, such a good friend. And he asked me one question. That revolutionized everything for me. And maybe some of those of you who are listening can, can relate to this.

You know, I was 22 and I love to Jesus. I had been in Sunday school, my whole life. I had a healthy youth group, invited my friends to youth group loved it. I studied political science, but I took all of these extra Bible classes. And I knew that Jesus had come to earth to die on the cross for my sins. But this day I was sitting across from Mark and he took out a piece of paper.

And on that piece of paper, he wrote a long straight line. And on that line, he said, this represents Jesus's earthly life. And I want to ask you a question, Michelle. If Jesus only came to die on the cross, is that perfect sacrifice for us, but then why didn't he die sooner? And I remember sort of sitting there like, ah, are we allowed to ask questions like that?

You know, this was so new for me. And I didn't know how to answer. I stammered for a while. And then I said, well it's because Jesus also came to show us how to live and how to love. So then Mark says to me, okay, true. Well then why didn't he stay longer so that I would know how to live and how to love when I was 80 years old.

And it was that day on that piece of paper where that he marked out a section, a period of three and a half years. And that day he invited me to come and see. What Jesus did during a short period of time, which is just a few guys and few gals and something that would change the world forever. And that's what got me to, to where I am today.

That started me on this life long journey. It's a daily thing of studying Jesus's life chronologically. And I always say that I met Jesus because of his death, but I fell in love with him because of his life.

Doug: I love that Michelle, I think it was five years ago when we were in Israel, 2015, and we had 185 leaders from 53 countries for our, uh, global leadership summit.

And I remember being in Magdela and they're in the chapel there in Magdalena, you having the opportunity to speak to that group and to share about Jesus and his women disciples. And I just remember. Tears streaming down my face. Cause it wasn't a perspective, I mean, I, I didn't doubt any of, any of the things that you were saying or any of the truth that you are you you're pointing to.

I had just not heard it taught. And, being married, obviously, you know, my wife being this amazing disciple maker, but also being the dad of six daughters, hearing that teaching and that vision for Jesus investing in women disciples. It was just so incredibly powerful. You know, what what's, what's that journey been like for you?

I mean, as, as Mark showed you that little three and a half year on the line at what point in the journey did you start to notice the women in Jesus story?

Michelle: Yeah, that's a great question. I started to notice an absence of women when Jesus goes up on the mountain and prays all night and comes down to a group of disciples, disciples.

And. And English term, you know, gender inclusive and also discípulos and Spanish, a gender inclusive term. So a group of disciples are there and he chooses 12 and he chooses 12 men that day. And I remember for me, as I

journeyed along, looking very close at Jesus's life was just saying every day, Jesus, I just want to do what you're doing. I just want to do what you're doing.

And at that point I had been in ministry for years, equipping women to be disciple makers and to form disciple-making movements. And when I realized that the 12 were men, it really stopped me in my tracks. And that was the moment when I really started to dig deep and say, well, if Jesus didn't equip and send women, then I don't want to do that either.

So Jesus either revealed to me something that I'm not seeing, or I quit. I quit. So it was at that point that I took a pink pen. And I said, I'm gonna look beyond, um, I'm going to continue chronologically after the choosing of the 12th. And I'm going to Mark every time I see women at the feet of Jesus being equipped to sow the word and also being sent.

And so it was in that larger group, perhaps in the, in the 72 that we start to see women, but he was training, uh, leaders, even, even before he sent out the 12, we start to see. See Susanna and Joanna and Mary. So it sort of came as a big clash to me. I remember, um, I remember putting my head on the pillow and hearing him say, Michelle, keep looking.

Keep going. And so I kept going, I kept going beyond the Luke eight and just started marking every time I saw him really investing in women.

Doug: You know, after I, I heard you teach that day and, you know, you gave all of us in the room, our own pink pen and encouraged us to do that as well. And I, I gave all of, all of my daughters and my wife pink pens, and shared with them, the link to your teaching, but studying through the gospels, one of the questions that I had, one of the things that. And I don't, I don't know that there's an answer to this, but it was a question. And a thought that I had is, you know, well, Jesus sent out the 12 two by two, but then later toward the end of his earthly ministry, he sent out the 72, two by two.

And after, after hearing you teach and then reading that, I thought, hm, I wonder if some of those 72 that he sent out where some of the women disciples who had been with him and were, were now trained and equipped to minister in that way. And so I, I was just so grateful for you opening my eyes, our eyes to, to the women disciples.

And, um, I believe it's. Uh, Luke eight three, where, where we first see names mentioned there, right. Um, but then I forget which of the gospels it's ad, but it's at the crucifixion when, again, uh, some of those same women disciples are mentioned, but it says them among the many women who were following Jesus.

And when I saw that, I was just like, Th this picture of multiplication, right. That women were reaching other women discipling other women. They had become followers of Jesus. And what a, what a gift that was to me personally. And I know to our team, to the, the movement to, uh, have our eyes open to that. So.

I just, I want to say thank you.

Michelle: Yes. And you know, one of the practical things that we can all do is from Luke eight on chronologically, if we just remember when we read disciples to really ask of the text, you know, we have this idea and to read disciples, we think men, we think apostles. So when we read the word disciples or in Spanish, when we read the word discípulos to try to remember that there's a mixed and mixed gender there.

But the women are there too. So because of that, of that word, I think they get hidden. And maybe that's why I just didn't see them there before. But man, once you start really saying who is really here, when we say disciples, who's here and start to see women's names, the women's presence. And we could go on and on about all that we've discovered these women really being close to Jesus and him, him counting on them to participate and not just be around, not just to do things that maybe we expected women to do, but to participate in the movement of making disciples. It's really, it's really powerful and that's why I didn't quit. That's why I continue to do what I do.

Doug: Yeah. And with Singular, um, and its its mission, its heartbeat. I'm sure that you see, that equipping and deploying of women disciples as integral through and through, across, across Latin America, right?

Michelle: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely. It was singular. We're an organization that partners with the local churches and ministries throughout Latin American, Spain to reproduce disciple makers.

So men and women who are making disciples. Yeah,

Josh: I was going to say I was clearly evident and was one of the things I think you bring to the sunlight making network globally and how you, you you've modeled that in Costa Rica. Um, my wife and I even went down to spend time with Mark and Karen just, we were blown away with how integrated it was as both men and women.

And so that's the culture. I think you have really helped and body and doing that. Yeah. One of the things just of, as well as talking with Mark Edwards on a regular basis, and just thinking through just in light of even kind of issues

facing today, we hear so much happening in North America, right? And so the news is all what's happening in the States and rarely, rarely do we hear the news is happening around us.

And in particular you can just give us a quick update what's life like in COVID last couple of months, give us a quick Costa Rican update.

Michelle: Yeah, that's a great question. It's interesting daily reported deaths, um, in many Latin American countries, uh, continues to be really high. And I don't know if you guys have heard recently that Latin America has been called the epicenter of the pandemic.

So we're sort of, we're in the thick of things here. Um, and all the countries where we're working in Singular in Costa Rica, we're not one of the most effected countries, but it's a very conservative country. And so, um, we are very homebound still. Our kids have been doing virtual school since March. Uh, anyone who can work from home has been asked to work from home and businesses are open off and on, but transportation is so restricted that businesses feel like there's, there's no business. So we're still really in the thick of things and really can still relate to, to isolation, just social distancing and, um, to really continuing to just ask the Lord what he wants of us in this.

Josh: Yeah. Mark was saying a number of the pastors he was working with, you know, they hadn't received any kind of tithes and offerings any kind of four months.

And so pastors are, we used to say on average, You're getting 2000 a month for a tithes. We're now getting less than a hundred a month. And so the economic challenges with just ministry leaders. W what, what are you hearing? What are you seeing? What's the, what's the, like, in terms of the local church?

Michelle: Yeah.

You know, pastors and ministry leaders are fatigued from the virtual platform because that's, uh, continuing to be where we meet. And I think there is a growing frustration of losing their audience. And, uh, you know, one of the questions that surfacing among many leaders. Is how do we measure success?

Because now in a virtual platform, it's so easy to say, how many views, how many likes, you know, how many electronic tithes. And so one of the conversations we've been excited to have with leaders is about what does it look like to invite people to be at the feet of Jesus instead of, you know, the typical inviting them to be in ministry meetings, virtual retreats, church online or in addition to that, I think it's so tempting. Even for me, it's just so tempting to

let attendance was it, whether it's physical attendance or virtual attendance to be the metric that we use instead of real transformation from being at Jesus's feet and really bravely and dependently doing what Jesus did.

So, yeah, I'd say a big pressing issue right now is how do we get people at the feet of Jesus? When they tend to be glued to the news or have trouble getting out of bed or losing their jobs, et cetera. Uh,

Josh: I love that. Is there anything practically what you're doing with Mr leaders to help them? Because I think, I think one of the things that just hits me right away, there's so much commonality.

What do you guys are experiencing? What we're experiencing, but the common thing is is Jesus, how do we help? Ministry leaders not get discouraged and distracted with you're right. All the other metrics, but how do we help them fall in love with Jesus? Is there some things you're learning just practically what's that look like in terms of, on screens and how do you, what are you learning to draw that out with ministry leaders?

Michelle: Yeah. Well, one thing is, you know, are trying to talk more about Jesus than anything else. So what's it look like to talk more about Jesus than anything else. And, um, and really going back even to Luke 10:42, it's very interesting that Jesus has conversation with Mary, another woman disciple. He says, you know, she has chosen the best and nobody can take it away from her.

And so we're just in this period of time where we feel like everything, you know, it seems like everything's being taken away from us. You know, all the things that we don't have. I love that Jesus address like being at my feet can not be taken away from you. So in that, you know, some of the successful things, I see people doing youth groups that have, um, daily reading plans with their youth group, just keeping the kids in the word from their homes on a daily basis, pastors who have come on, like they'll come on with, uh, with an audible message every morning with some little thing in the word.

So it's not a. Service it's like a daily, let's get it as feet. Let's be in the word, friends who are deciding to call each other an early morning phone call. You know, we used to never, well, we kind of never did phone calls anymore. You know, returning to phone calls, let's pray together every morning. So different, I think consistency maybe is where I've seen some success in that staying consistent and close to your students, congregation and friends in a way that really helps, helps one another accompanies them and being at the feet of Jesus.

Josh: Yeah. I love that. We were just talking through Doug a little bit earlier on, uh, setting this up, talking through calmer rhythms that we practice as ministry leaders is our annual planning retreats, where we get away by ourselves to listen to the voice, the father, how Jesus would often go to a lonely place, an isolated place and pray.

And you've written some stuff on this. Jesus kind of isolation doing some studying. Do some I'm really just want you to open up and just walk us through what you're learning about. Jesus.

Michelle: Yeah, I, you know, it's so interesting because my favorite thing about Jesus is that he's so relevant and when I'm going through different things in life, and I know you guys do too, we ask this question, you know, just throughout our day, you know, Jesus, you know, By any chance, did you face anything like this?

You know, was there any event in your life that in some way was similar to, to what we're living? And so when COVID-19 came around, that was, that was a big question. A lot of us were asking like, wow, did Jesus ever faced like a real sudden change if forced isolation from people in places that he was used to being because of a real life threat that's that's what happened to us all of a sudden.

And I always ask that question because if the answer is yes, you know, if it's like the Jesus did face something similar, I want to ask, like, how did you feel? What did you do? What do you learn in this time? It just happened that one day with Wendy, who's a college aged girl that I disciplined. We just happened to come across John 11:53 and 54.

So, of course, those are two verses that I've read before, but because of the circumstances, I it's like the Jews say we turn, turn, turn the scripture. So we're just turning it another angle. And suddenly I see, wait a minute. Jesus is forced into isolation and this is a time when he's coming out of Peria, he gets to Lazarus, raises Lazarus from the dead. There's a sudden Sanhedrin meeting and everything escalates, and there's really this danger that the Jews want to terminate his life and it's not Passover yet. So, and if we look at John 11, I'll just, um, so from that day on, they plotted to kill him. So from that day on, they plotted to kill him.

Therefore, Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews. There it is. It's, it's not the threat of a virus, but it's the threat of the Jews. And so both of us, Jesus and us are experiencing this sudden change, this forced isolation, because our lives are really in danger. So when do you, and I just sat in this and we were just like, okay, well, well, what comes next?

Because if Jesus faced something, if he felt this, if you learn from this well, will we want to too? There's only one more verse that really tells us what happened. So we were like, we're just going to sit in this one verse and just observe what's there. So the next verse says he departed from there to the countryside, near the wilderness to a town called Ephraim, and he stayed there with his disciples. And we thought that's it. And then we thought, wow, let's look at what we observe here. You know for some reason I picture the father. It's a moment of crisis. He's got to get, he's got to go Jesus out of Judea. And so I pictured him taking his binoculars and saying, where am I going to put my son?

And as he is taking him as the spirit is taking him over to ramp, it just made me, cause I passed by the wilderness as a scripture. It just reminded me of that scene of when the spirit leads Jesus, after the baptism into the wilderness, that was into a time of temptation. 40 days. This time it's like the spirit is driving him into safety and isolation.

One is at the beginning of his ministry. One was at the end of his ministry? So then we kept asking, okay, Jesus, spirit led into isolation. It makes me ask for myself, and I can't speak for everyone, but I really started to ask myself and that's for my family and for Singular. Has the spirit driven me, has a spirit led me into isolation for something. Because it's easy for me to think that the government drove me into isolation or virus the virus drove me into isolation, but my question is, did the spirit lead me here for something? And as we continue to look at Jesus, we also noticed, that Jesus, like you just said, Josh, he, he had a custom, uh, rhythm of isolating himself. So it was that boat. It was that mountain. It was that garden. And now it's Ephraim.

But in Ephraim very curiously, we don't, we don't have any details about what he taught, you know, what He said, what they did. It's nothing. And it makes me ask the question. Was this a time that was so intimate at the end of his life with the father, that it was just too sacred to write about.

That reminds me of my friend, Caroline and I, we think that about this conversation that happened when he says rose before he met the two people on the road to Emaus he met with Peter, but we don't know anything about that conversation. And can you imagine how intimate that conversation would have been. But there's nothing. So this kind of reminds me, we just don't know what happened.

And it makes me think, was this such a Holy thing, intimate time between Jesus and the father, of isolation, very close to his, to his death. And what I don't have

to speculate about is that, is that we see that Jesus is isolated to align. Every time Jesus got away, it was to align, align to one voice aligned to one will.

And so I can't just help, but think here at the end of Jesus's life, the spirit led him into isolation and he was doing some aligning. And I've been asking about my, um, of my life. It's a really good question, Father, what's a need of alignment and I just want to encourage everyone. Who's listening to keep asking that question.

Uh, even if you're in, re-entry now out of isolation into re-entry, because sometimes it's hard to put your finger on that when you're at the peak of isolation, but when you start to re-enter, you start to feel different tensions. And a lot of times those tensions are in-depth indications of where the Lord is trying or longs to align us to His voice, to His, to His will.

So I've been doing some, some aligning for me. Um, trust has been aligning for the first time in my life. If my parents get sick or have a grandparent died, I can't just get on a plane and go be with them because borders are closed. That's, uh, that's been an interesting feeling for me to say Lord, um, with less liberties than I'm used to do I trust you with my life. Can I trust you with my life? I've been aligning in time, man. I, I just, we're actually having meals and sitting around with our kids and just like sitting there and being present and talking. I actually have time to do a prayer walk in the morning and I'm kind of embarrassed like, why didn't I have time for this before?

But I was just rushed and I just feel the Lord's at rush for what? I mean, we had some really good, great ministry things planned for 2020. They were probably going to be awesome. And there's a disappointment there, but I also just hear the Lord say, well, what's the rush. You know, what's the rush. So trust and time have been a couple of things that the Lord has really been speaking to me about. And I, and I think I'm an isolation to do some, some aligning in those areas.

Doug: Oh, Michelle loved that so much. Just that piece of. Alignment. And it's a, it's a great reminder, you know, I think for us as ministry leaders in this season, there's, there's so much uncertainty and so much upheaval of everything that was planned or everything that was anticipated or expected and there's decision fatigue.

It seems like every week you're, uh, you're. You're having to rethink a decision that you might've just made a week earlier because now things have changed again. And it's. Exhausting. And I think that aligning piece, you know, one of the things is I've just been in the scriptures, reading, reading, reading through the

Bible, you know, chronologically throughout the course of this year as a ministry, we studied the life of Christ chronologically.

Um, and I love how you've you've, um, highlighted that, but I've been reading through beginning in Genesis and through. It's through the Bible chronologically this year, and I'm in second Chronicles and a couple of the, uh, the stories King ASAP and King Jehoshaphat and them seeking the face of the Lord. Um, but then them ending up making decisions that it turned out, that they worked from a human perspective.

But it wasn't what God wanted. And sometimes, you know, we can try and figure it out on our own and it can seem to work, but just because it works in our eyes, it doesn't mean it's what God wanted. And I think there, there can be a lot of tenancy for us during this season just to try and figure it out rather than to seek him.

And I think that piece of. Isolation, we, we tend to resist it, but you know, to, to pull away like Jesus is modeled for us and to just be with the father and to listen for his voice. And it's when you hear, hear his voice, that that alignment comes. I just love that, you know, one of the things that. Uh, as you were sharing there just kept resonating with me.

As you mentioned several times about being with your, your disciple Caroline and you know, this conversation or that conversation. And so much of disciple-making. It doesn't happen in the context of programs. It's not about a program. It's not about a curriculum. It's not about a class. It's about relationships.

And, you know, Mark three 14, when Jesus appointed the 12, it says he, he appointed them that they might be with him. And it's that be with factor? And you, you brought this up, you know, there, when he went into eFront fem and why did he, why did he go? Well, he was. Going there. And he was going to be with his disciples.

And during this season of isolation, season of. COVID social distancing. How do, how do we as ministry leaders continue to practice that be with factor of disciple-making.

Michelle: Yeah, Doug, I was gonna, um, kinda make that same point about this verse. It's so interesting that even in isolation there, Jesus is with his disciples.

And if I were Jesus, I would be thinking I've only got a couple of weeks left. What am I doing here? You know, but he doesn't need the multitude around

him. He doesn't need to be teaching in Solomon's Colonnade in order to do the work in order at this point to finish the work that the Father gave him to do.

And that's just been such an encouragement to my heart that not even a, a global pandemic can take away from us, the work that the father has given us to do. And it makes me just be like, Jesus' strategy is so intelligent. It's so awesome. Like, you know, we can do it even in the middle of this and what's next.

We don't know what's next, but I really have this confidence that we can continue to make disciples in the middle of it. So it really interesting for us in Costa Rica, the government, calls what we, what we are living in a social bubble. So the people that you're quarantined with your family or close neighbors is your social bubble.

So we've just really been concentrating on the fact that we have a social bubble of family and close neighbors. And we have something Jesus didn't have, which are video calls, and we can continue to do the principles that Jesus taught us to be in the Word, to pray, and to be in relationship specifically, really a practical thing that I'm just realizing right now is that.

With things the way they are right now, we can pray. We can study the word, but it's that relational part that's lacking a bit, especially in Latin America where we're so, um, relationally, we gravitate towards relationship.

Doug: Such as social culture, right?

Michelle: It is. And very practically, we're just realizing that we need to play in our meetings on zoom.

We need to play. And so that has to do with like bingo or Pictionary or, but man, I'll hear Lesandro, you know, up here in the office with his guys on Tuesday nights. And they're like rolling on the floor, laughing about something or another, but in the absence of not being able to sit down and have a pizza together, Or just, you know, they're always, usually at our house, we've just been saying, what does it look like to continue to cultivate that relational part?

And, um, and we've had to be really creative in playing together. And sometimes we forget about that specific element of, of disciple-making, uh, going deeper together in relationships and even playing together. And especially since it's such a high stress time, that's been something that we've been really trying to be creative and implementing in all of our meetings and in our disciple-making relationships.

Josh: Yeah, I love that. And you know, you often wonder, did Jesus just have one of those days? Hey guys, let's just, this is how this is played today. Let's just relax, dude, there a day where he just. Enjoy being with his disciples. I think he did. I think there's these little snapshots of windows where I think he did, you know, when he, with the administry and canine, he says he went down to Capernaum and remained there for a few days.

But what did he do in those few days after that miracle and Kaino. And I think that that joy to be able to do that with your disciples is huge. And I love the connection. You just tie it into the beginning of his ministry. Was Jesus drawing him into the wilderness. But as well as the, hadn't seen the end of his ministry, that, that place of isolation and how critical that is for ministry leaders to always be alignment with the voice of the father.

And to see COVID not as a, like you said, as a government thing or a living in fear, but saying, okay, what is the Holy spirit whispering? To me in this and this moment. And, um, and to not be in a rush. And I, uh, uh, a statement that's made to me a number of years ago was that moving at the speed of trust. So learning how to move at the speed of trust.

And so, as you're seeing that with your disciples, moving at the speed of trust and being engaged with more meals and prayer walks and seeing this, uh, this whole thing come together with learning to go deeper, uh, at the feet of Jesus. So what are some other things Michelle, as you're kind of thinking through this, that you've been learning, you've been reading, you're listening to, that's kind of filling your tank up.

That's helping you kind of remain intimate with the father.

Michelle: That's a great question. I listen every day to a Jesuit, uh, prayer app called pray as you go. It's about 10 minutes of song and scripture meditation, Lectio, Divina style. If you're familiar with that. And I just love it because, you know, I've heard it said that the Jews say of Westerners that we dissect.

The word of God, you know, that we put in all the grammar in the right places and the tenses when the word of God is what is supposed to be dissecting us. And so I just love this prayer tool because it's what helps me be dissected. So that's one of the daily things that I've been listening to. Wow.

Josh: Well, we'll link that into our show notes and any way that people can connect with you.

Do you guys, are you connected on the singular, have a website or, um, a Twitter page. I can get connected with you.

Michelle: Yes. I actually have really, really big news are a singular website. We'll be launching mid September, 2020, and it will be the best hub for connecting in both English and Spanish. Um, in fact, if you're listening today and you have a Spanish speaker in your life, Who you have wanted to invite to come and see more.

And she's us. This will be a place where you can go together for resources and for other conversation pieces with a singular focus on Jesus. So it will be www.singular.org. And of course, personally, I would love to connect with you as well. And you can write me at Michele with one L M I C H E L E dot Montenegro at.

Josh: Michelle. This is great. Any other final things on the edge of your seat, things you want to just kind of give you the last word as we're wrapping up here?

Michelle: Yes, I can not say goodbye. Um, without just expressing personally to you, Doug, and to Josh, how grateful. How grateful I am to you, how grateful we are to you.

Sonlife North America, organizationally, our partnership is so strong and so fruitful, uh, through fusion, you know, our short-term missions experience for students also through all the resource sharing that we do. And I just feel like most importantly, your encouragement and your company in the trenches of living like Jesus.