

The Jesus Story with Bill Perkins

Season 2 Episode 7

Bill Perkins: I want everybody in the world to read the story of Jesus whether they ever believe in him or not, I at least want them to read the story.

Open

Josh Yates: Welcome friends to Sonlife everyday disciple makers podcast. And today we have a great conversation with bill Perkins and I'm looking forward to having that interview with him. But before we get there, Wayne, as we talk about everyday disciple I'm just curious as we're entering into now kind of summer season, and this is a great time to connect with with our friends or neighborhood or our disciples.

What are some of the things that you've done over the summer months that was maybe a highlight thing you enjoy doing with your disciples?

Wayne Wrz: Yeah. At our church, we have a Saturday evening service as well as Sunday morning. And a few years ago, we were going pretty regularly on Saturday nights. A group of people that just had a fire is started at our friend's house.

They would have their fire pit out we'd roast marshmallows and hot dogs. And anything else you can put on a stick and put over the fire, but by

Josh Yates: the way, have you ever had Starburst, no Starburst with the fire? Okay. Listeners telling you, just try it, wait until they kind of get soft and kind of gooey, and then they harden a little bit.

So outside's kind of. Crusty and Insight's kind of gushy. It's kinda like one of those, you know, the, the gum that you used to have as a kid, I was like Gushers.

Wayne Wrz: Yeah. It's kind of like that. It's good. Yeah. That sounds like a lot more work than it's worth. It is interesting. I'll give you that, but we, we we'd have people over and probably have, you know, eight to eight to a dozen people and just hang out by the fire.

On a Saturday evening, just getting to know each other, building those relationships. I've just always enjoyed that, that I get to go to church and be part of a church family. But As part of a church family, I want to do more than just see you at church. So having, having times usually time of the fire is not very hurried time.

Everybody's kind of sitting back here. It was kind of relaxed. The kids are playing. So those were always fun times to build relationships throughout the summer or sunsets of fairly late up here in the Northwest. So getting to hang out from like eight to nine 30 or 10 o'clock on a Saturday night around a fire has been a fantastic time with church family.

What is a summer activity? Josh? You've enjoyed.

Josh Yates: Yeah. When I, when I think of these things over the years of things that are affordable, things that are maybe kind of fun out of the ordinary things that I've worked. And this is going back into the archive. So I'm going back, man, probably this was probably 20 years plus early in the ministry.

I was thinking of a way to kind of connect my students without a big program. Without trying to convince them to come to a camp or sign up you know, maybe a missions trip or a work project. I just want to spend time and get to know my students.

And and so I, I, I went to the the complaint against sports. What kind of, one of these, you know, used, you know, sports equipment stores. And I saw all these you know, lawn cricket. And so I grabbed a handful of this thing,

throwing it back in the church van. And I knocked on a student's door. Like, Hey, come with me.

We're going to play lawn cricket, but it's going to be extreme lawn cricket. So you got here's the. Three rules. You gotta have, we gotta wear hat. You have to have long socks with shorts would be great too. And dress shoes. Right? So you got put on the dress shoes and then now ask that student who should we call or who's house should we go to, so he would invite the next person and then that person would get in the van and okay, who are you gonna invite then invite somebody else.

So the power of the invitation. So before you know it, we filled the van and we'd go to the park and, you know, the wickets were across the park. And so it was this extreme, you know long cricket, then it costs me hardly at all. Hmm, but it was, it was fun with students and it was, it didn't cost me hardly any money, but actually it was time.

It was time as you're playing, as you're laughing. And that became kind of our summer tradition. It was just extreme long cricket. Who's going to come who's available. And it was the simple, affordable, relational way of connecting with, with my students.

And. when we start thinking about ways to connect and things about connecting with our, with our disciples. Sometimes we overthink it and I love today's interview with bill Perkins is he's going to share with us a simple tool that he uses for his disciple-making. And it's a book, a resource called the Jesus story.

So here's my interview with bill Perkins,

Interview Bill Perkins

Josh Yates: Bill, it's great to have you on the Sonlife Everyday Disciple makers podcast. It was about 17 years ago when I first met. I, We have a mutual friend, Gary Withdrawal who grabbed a bunch of these young, just young men. And we went up to this cabin up on Mount Hood and spent time together and scripture time and just diving in.

And that was my first engagement with you. And I thought, this is going to be a fun relationship. And so over the years, we've, we've connected. You live in our backyard and chance for you to hear a chance for me to kinda get to know you, your heart passion for just for the gospel and and Jesus Christ.

And so Bill, it's a pleasure having you on our show today.

Bill Perkins: Yeah. Wow. That brings back a fond memory. I'd kind of forgotten about that experience. Yeah. Gary was, he's really got a talent for connecting guys in a very casual, almost recreational sort of a setting. And that was beautiful up at Mount hood in that cabin.

Yeah, that was great. Did you, was that a family member of yours and own that cabin or someone else?

Josh Yates: That was another mutual friend of ours. Yeah. Yeah. No, it wasn't. But, but yeah, we would just sit around and just he would just the ability to kind of speak to the heart of man. I think that was kind of just a straight shooter.

You call what it is and you just got to, I think some of the root issues that us men struggle through, but more importantly, you just pointed people to Jesus. And I remember walking away when I was a young leader, I was his youth pastor. And I was like, finally, someone who is speaking honestly about the pressures of leadership, the pressures of just as me being a father me being a husband.

And so, yeah, so I really appreciate your, your writings of rendering. What, 20 22, 23 different books. Well, I

Bill Perkins: can't take credit for all of them, but yeah, I helped a few guys get some books published.

Josh Yates: Yeah, but in the, in the later number of years, you've been focusing more on a really a blended story called the Jesus Story, it's it's from Cheney's work of Jesus Christ In Stereo, and it's a blending of, of the gospels into kind of one continuous narrative.

And so this is. Taken just root. You did a Kickstarter campaign probably about five years ago now. Six years. Okay. And tell us a little about kinda your, your, your Jesus Story.

Bill Perkins: Well I actually, I had a spiritual revival 10 years ago. I am a Dallas Seminary grad. Which means that I was taught the theology of cessationism, which is the idea that the supernatural gifts ended at the end of the book of acts because they weren't needed anymore.

The purpose of the gifts, according to this theology, was to authenticate the messenger. And the message. And that had happened by the end of the book of Acts. So God sunset those ministries. When I was in seminary, they kind of just skipped over the supernatural gifts of healing and words of knowledge and prophecy and stuff like that.

And if someone came to me and they said they really wanted to hear from God, I'd hand them a Bible and say, well, read this. If you want to hear from God, this is where he speaks. And I was speaking at a men's event in Louisiana, and I had spoken Friday and Saturday, you know, on Sunday morning, I was sitting in the back of a church with an African-American buddy that was one of the other speakers, a young guy, actually.

But that morning from the moment I ride at that church, I started hearing this girl's name in my mind over and over Lisa, Lisa, Lisa, Lisa, and I turned to my buddy who himself believe that God still spoke to people apart from the Bible. And I go, man, Jeff, I don't know what's going on here.

I keep hearing this girl's name. And he goes, yeah, bro, God wants you to minister to Lisa. You got to find her. That's, how am I going to do that? Ask the guy at the soundboard. So the guy at the soundboard connected me with Lisa after we talked for a moment, I prayed for Lisa. And Josh, she was dramatically healed.

I mean, she kept trying to recreate this pain that she had had for years. And she couldn't, and her eyes got big as saucers and she just burst into tears of joy. And I was standing there, like I was in this, in this bubble of the supernatural. I'd been surrounded. I'd suddenly stepped into the presence of the kingdom of God and different rules applied.

And when I got back home, I called a buddy of mine that taught at a seminary and he goes, well, Bill probably never happened again. God just wanted to show this young woman that he loved her. And I got off the phone and I thought there is no way it's, I'm not going back to that. There's more here. And I realized that there was a Jesus and I did not know.

Now I had written commentary on the gospels for three Bibles. PK study Bible, the leadership Bible and the Journey a Bible by Willow Creek. I had written three books, I think, published by Zondervan and Tyndale based on the life of Christ and who knows how many sermons. But I had read more books about the gospels, I had in fact, probably written more about the gospels and I had actually read the gospels. Well in March of 2011, I told the Lord I would read through the gospel every month until the end of the year.

Well, in that was in March in June, I was speaking at a men's event at Cannon Beach Conference Center on the Oregon coast. And I told the director, I was reading through the gospels and he gave me a copy of this book called Jesus Christ, The Greatest Life, which is an eight and a half by 11 with the blended gospel, Chinese blended gospel in it.

And all of these study guides, it was like a textbook. Charts and maps and graphs and timelines. And it, I devoured it having read the gospels. I was eager for more information. And I read that every, at the end of the year in

2011, I told the Lord I'm going to read the gospels every month for the rest of my life.

After I'd read through that book two or three years, three years, maybe, every month. I had a vision for a book that would be the gospels in a novel form. But I want it to be like a classic and you've, and you've seen it. It's got the gold gilding on the top. It's a beautiful, hard cover with with, you know, gold lettering on the front.

And inside I've got 20 Gustaf Dore pictures. Yeah. For those of you listeners, who've never heard of the guy. He was the most prolific artist in the 18 hundreds. And if you ever see those old Bibles where you open them up and they've got these Bible, they look like pencil drawings and great detail. Those are actually wood carvings.

That Dore did, that they've dipped into ink and then put them on the book. And that's how they created that. So I got a copyright, I put 20 of those in, and then I did a Kickstarter campaign. Josh guess who the first contributor supporter, my Kickstarter was.

It was you, it was, you knew that we talked about.

Josh Yates: Yeah. The only reason why I knew about it is because my one of, my students, my youth ministry was Hey, I has this video thing, this guy named Bill Perkins, I was like, what, what are you doing for Bill Perkins? And he's like, you know, Bill. So he's, he, he's the one who created the videos for that.

And then I was like, okay, you, you tell me the day that goes live, and I'm buying them. So I have a little bit of an inside scoop, so I knew the day went live and I ordered these as I could. And I've, hadn't been handing them out. But you know, some of the challenges was, I mean, it's beautiful, but price point and accessibility, how to, how to get this in the hands of my disciples.

Right. You know, I want, I want my disciples to fall in love with Jesus. And so the accessibility for me was like, okay, how do I get this? I love it. Beautiful. How do I get it out? Then fast forward. Just a few weeks ago, I was with one

of my mentors, Mike Higgs, and I gave him one of those copies and I found out he was like, Hey, there's this paperback Bill's got and he's handing up to everybody.

And so that's why we got reacquainted it. I was like, we've got to figure this out because I wanted to get this in the hands of every person because I too, have committed to read that not monthly, but annually reading through that. It's part of my daily rhythms reading through that. In fact, I did a sabbatical two summers ago and that's the only book I read.

I said during my sabbatical, well, one thing I want to fall in love with is a Jesus. And and so,

Bill Perkins: yeah, I, I read it over a hundred times now over a hundred months, I read it every day. I'm actually in the process now of memorizing the Sermon on the Mount. And I've, I've memorized a lot of Scripture and I have a box with all these verses in it and I've, and I'm not reviewing those anymore because I'm just memorizing the Sermon on the Mount and I've never found such joy in memorizing it, words of Jesus.

And they're unlike anyone else's. He was not only, only this, you know, the, the God man, he was the most brilliant man who ever walked the planet. And the way he says things, the questions he asks, the insights he brings and having read it over a hundred times. Memorizing it is just taking me to a whole different level with Jesus.

Well in December of 2019. I, by the way, Josh, I never had any desire to meet with guys to do this together. And people would periodically you say, I should do that. I just, just wanted to know Jesus better. That's it. I just, in every month I'll see something. I've never seen a learn, something I never knew. And every day when I read it, it's fun for me.

But, but in December of 2019, I got a word from the Lord and it was duplicate. Hmm. And so now I meet with guys in Zoom meetings one hour, every other week. Their assignment is twofold. Number one, read it every day at their pace. Mine's 10 pages a day to do it in a month.

They can read one page a day, 2, 3, 4, 5. It doesn't matter, but every day you're going to walk with Jesus, a little, a few steps. And if you have a question, you put a question mark in the margin. And if you have an insight, you underline it. That's that's assignment one, assignment two is duplicate. Duplicate.

If we're meeting, you're going to bring other people at some point, or you're going to start a group of your own. Well, so I started a group March of 2020, and then COVID hit and that group video every other week on Zoom. And we met for six months and then the six months. One of the guys who lives in Joel white, who's a pastor in Sherwood, just around the corner here.

He's been duplicating the other guys. They kind of went on from the Jesus story to other subjects, but it's stunning what's happened. There are, there are guys participating and I think seven different countries. I don't know how many states. And these guys, these guys have a vision and it's all been organic.

I'm not motive, I'm not advertising or trolling for people. They're coming to me. And sometimes the Lord will give me the name of a man. I know, and I'll call him Gary Ringer, Life Song for orphans, as they care for 16,000 kids all over the world. And. We started meeting. Then after our second meeting, he called me up and says, do you realize how many people we could reach?

If all we do is meet with people that read the gospels who duplicate. And so he and another business guy right now printing 10,000 copies with a leather light cover. They've taken out the Dore images and they're replacing them with eight watercolor images painted by teenage kids that grew up in an orphan.

It's stunning. And just a month before that businessman printed 4,440 copies all to be given away. If their vision, for getting the gospel of Jesus Christ into the hands of as many people as possible blows me away. It blows me away.

And there's a movement of God right now where th there's something happening. I don't know if it's got to do with COVID. I don't know if it's got to

do with the upheld evil in the world, but right now, what I'm sensing people want Jesus, not religion, not that the information dump that comes into our heads when we're in many classes and even churches, they want Jesus Christ.

And in this book, there's no chapters or verses or cross references or footnotes or any of that sort of stuff. They just get Jesus.

Josh Yates: Yeah. And I think that's why what pulled me in was the simplicity of it, the beauty of it how often times what I I'm guilty of reading or getting a good Bible has great commentary sets in it.

Right. And so are you reading what others are saying? Where, what their, their commentary and I'm reading for, for knowledge. And rather than when I read them. Um, I actually am experiencing the person of Jesus.

Bill Perkins: Yes. And he promised that the Holy Spirit would teach us the meaning of his words, but we got to listen and we got to read, for instance, I was thinking about this the other day.

Are you familiar with this verse? Jesus said, if you abide in me and the words of Dallas Willard or John MacArthur or John Mark Comer, abide in, you ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. That's what he said. He said, if you abide in me and my words abide in you, he also said at the end of the sermon on the Mount, if you build your life on the rock foundation of my words, when storms hit you'll stand, you won't be blown away.

Well, then my question is this, how can the words of Jesus abide me, if I'm not abiding in his words. And I think God, look, I've written commentary on the gospels for three Bibles. Every one of my bond books has study questions at the end of each chapter. And there is value in all of that, but it is secondary to the gospels.

Because when we read the gospels the Holy Spirit will empower the words of Jesus Christ. And he will explode those words in our mind and give us insight we never had. Ever. And I used to, I used to ask questions in discussions to involve people. I ask questions now, so people can teach me

because a guy reading the gospel for the first time will hear the Holy Spirit, show him something, and he doesn't even know what's going on.

He just sees something that's kind of cool. And he'll bring it and he'll share it and I'm going, wow, man, that thought never would have crossed my mind.

Josh Yates: Yeah. Yeah. Is there a moment there you can, that comes to, that comes to mind that you can go. Yeah, just recently, one of my, my groups, a guy opens up scripture and he had an observation or a question.

Bill Perkins: Perfect example. There's a, there's a guy that I meet with weekly professional guy. And. He's really big into weightlifting. You know, he got the heavy, like heavy, heavy lifting. And so I was talking to him about the temptation of Jesus and his subsequent appearance to John the Baptist cause he was baptized remember.

And then he went into the wilderness and he came out of the wilderness and he went back to John the Baptist. Yeah. And I told him, I said, you know, I bet you that Jesus was really emaciated, emaciated looked like it stepped out of a concentration camp. Hadn't eaten for 40 days, probably fatigued, dirty hair.

And, and, and Justin says, he said to me, he goes, I don't think that's what happened. And I said, well, what do you think happened? He goes, well, It says after the temptation, the angels ministered to him. Well, what kind of a ministry would, would be if a man hadn't eaten in 40 days and they didn't feed him. Paradigm shift for me, a total paradigm shift for me. All of a sudden, I didn't see Jesus of some skinny guy.

I saw a guy with his physicality strengthend. And great power and energy and coming into the presence of John's ministry as this powerful, unique individual, not something emaciated, ated, skinny guy coming out of the desert, having fasted. Why? Because I think God showed Justin what happened. The angels ministered to him, and certainly they fed him.

I mean, what kind of administry would that be? If I told you, man, we haven't eaten in 40 days and we can't get any food. Well, let me come over minister

to your Bill. You come over and pat me on the back. Good job with your fasting Bill, but they ain't got no food for you.

Josh Yates: I, I love, I love the idea of entering in together. It, it really says we want to encounter Jesus together rather than we want to just. And nothing wrong with, with studies or help us understand our knowledge input. But I think, I think the , if you will, the conversion experience for you that took place.

When all of a sudden you realize that it's not all this knowledge and information to which I got to regurgitate got, I teach on Sunday being, but 25 years as a, as a pastor. And all of a sudden you're like, actually I did it, all those things, but now I have a, this re Jesus is real. Jesus as a person and engaging in a conversation realizing I don't have the, I'm not the one that all the information, because they have the Holy Spirit just as much as I do and I'm transforming lives.

I think that's the, I dunno, the idea to duplicate. You don't have to duplicate a study, you're duplicating a person

Bill Perkins: and what's cool. Is this Josh to me at least. And it would be to you, I'm sure. I know that these guys, when they get in a group of me, I mean, like I said, I've heard the gospel over a hundred times over a hundred months and I, and I'm sure that they think, well, Bill's going to teach me some cool stuff and I hope I do, but.

I come to these meetings so God can use them to teach me. And when they realize that the Holy Spirit Will reveal truth about Jesus Christ, that he's not revealed to me, then all of a sudden there is this power in their experiences where now what the illustration I use is we're miners would one of these headlamps on, okay.

When we go into this mind every day with a little hand pick, And we bang on the wall. We bang on the wall and eventually a little nugget of gold falls down into our hand. And we come out of the mine, and when we meet with

our friends that are also reading through it, we show them this nugget and we ask them what they think.

And when they're blown away by the beauty of this nuggets, it inspires them the next day to go back into that cave. With that pick and that light and to continue to bang away, knowing that they've hit a vein of gold that's very, very deep. Solomon says that in the book of Proverbs about wisdom, if you seek her as silver and search for her as hidden treasure, you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God.

And when we do that with the gospels, we are never disappointed ever. Yeah.

Josh Yates: Well, what I'm curious about is the idea of duplicating. What are some of the sticking points?

And, you know, you mentioned you, hey, you've been in some, some groups some guys have gone on and are duplicating. Other guys have seen it just as another book study and I've kind of walked away. If you will picked up another, another study of what, what have you noticed in terms of just, how do you get guys to get this to stick and do that's our desire, but what are you learning?

Bill Perkins: That is a great question, Josh, because these guys are, are leaders. And when God I prayed and the Lord gave me these names and I connected with these guys, I told them upfront, we're going to meet weekly. Of course, now it's only every other week, but we're going to meet weekly and you're going to duplicate.

And after about three or four months, one of the guys that confessed, you know, when you said that, I thought, well, I'll meet, but I'm not duplicated. And he said, but now we're going to actually start groups here in our church and we're going to use the Jesus Story. And they started quite a few groups and they went through it.

And then after a few months they sunset the Jesus Story and they went on to other books except for Joel White, over in Sherwood, who, I don't know

how many groups he's got over there and Sherwood, but they're duplicated. And at first I was disappointed and I thought, well, what part of duplicate did I not communicate?

What, what, what happened there? And as I prayed about this, I really began to understand that they have a different game. You know, they they're, they're gifting is shepherding and not, not duplication. See, I want to reach the world for Christ. I want everybody in the world to read the story of Jesus whether they ever believe in him or not, I at least want them to read the story.

And, and when I realized that not everybody has that vision for duplication. Some men, according to gift are shepherd. And shepherding doesn't necessarily mean duplication. It means caring for the sheep. And if they sense that this group needs, they need to go through a book on marriage. Of course, Jesus, a to say about marriage and relationships and forgiveness and all that stuff.

So my experience has been, there is no theological topic that you will not cover if you read through the gospels, you name the theological subject, and I can tell you right now, Jesus talks about it sometimes in veiled terms. Sometimes you got to pull the veil back to see it we're here, but it's there, but from their perspective, let's go through this book on marriage or let's go through this book on anger, when Good Men Get Angry by Bill Perkins and Hey, yeah, let's go that.

Or when good men are tempted or Pure Desire, sexual purity, and then there's great value in those. And so I know, I understand that. Yeah know, th that's that not everybody buys off on it. And I'm good. I'm good with it. And I understand that even every guy that says, yes, I'll duplicate, they won't, but there's guys out there now that are.

Oh, my goodness.

Josh Yates: Yeah. Yeah. Some of those, those stories are conversations you're having, I know your phone has just been going off the hook and

people are coming to you ordering these, these by the case. And just, you're seeing something happen here that you're on fire right now. I wish people could catch the video of this.

Just seeing you just light up. I,

Bill Perkins: I, I've never in my experience as an author and I have over a million books and sales, And that's a lot of books. That's a lot of books. I wish it was one book instead of many books. But anyway, thank God for that, but. I've never seen anything. There was a big TV ministry that bought 10,000 copies of Fatal Attractions back in the nineties.

But since then I, I never anticipated these kinds of book sales. I never anticipated. People buying books by the thousands to give away and wanting to buy more. I, I, this isn't over. Let me give you one example of something that happened. I got an email from a man in South Africa, Cape town, South Africa .

And he had been getting my blog for years and he wanted to know if I would speak at a men's event in Cape Town via Zoom. And so I did a Friday night, Saturday. Some messages and then I set up a follow-up Zoom meeting. Cause I wanted to know how did it go? It's cross-cultural how did my style, how did the subject matter?

Did I talk too long? What, whatever. And. In the process of that, he told me his whole story and I told him what God was doing with these, these Jesus Stories Zoom meetings. And I asked him to pray about joining me and he goes, I don't need to pray about it. I'm in. So he's got this couples ministry there in South Africa.

In fact, they had just finished training for, I don't know how many, seventy-five couples or 150 couples, some, some number. And so he and his wife already had a growing ministry. And so he and his wife, they started meeting with me going, just doing what we do. We, we met weekly for one hour on zoom and they came with their questions and observations.

And after a few weeks they brought in, they brought in three other couples. And after we met for a couple of months, They multiplied in today. This was just back in December. And so today they have five groups with four couples in each group with a commitment to duplicate. It's really. No kidding.

That's just stunning. I have a donor that paid for two cases of the hard books backs, which I shipped down. And now our ministry is about to ship them a case of the soft cover. Again, I've had friends that have funded all of that. It costs 600 bucks by the way, to ship a case of books to South Africa.

And it's a good thing. You're in Wilsonville. Just drive over here. I'll bring them to you, Josh.

Josh Yates: Yeah. Yeah. And you're just seeing people to saying, Hey, I'm committed to this because it's, it's, it's, it is such an easy, very approachable, but more than that is people are coming in contact and the lives are being transformed by the person that work at Jesus.

Yeah. Bill, anything else in terms of just practical tips? Things that you have, you've seen, have really worked with these guys you're working with and just to make a final word of encouragement, come to summarizing what we're talking about

Bill Perkins: here. Here's what really works. Here's what works, I guarantee you.

So I was reading the gospels a couple of weeks ago, and as I've shared on meditating on the sermon on the mount. And I don't brag, I don't say that to pat myself on the back. I, I stayed to inspire the people. I got fired up to do this because one of the guys I meet with in Texas told me that every January, his pastor stands up and he has a January sermon where he recites the whole sermon on the Mount.

And he told me that, and I thought, man, I bet he knows Jesus well. And I thought, I want to know Jesus like that. Now I'm going to, I'm going to, they inspired me to memorize it. And so I was, I was meditating on the passage

where it says you know, be careful when you give to the need. Don't blow a trumpet to announce it.

That's what the hypocrites do in order to be applauded in the synagogue and on the streets. When you give to the needy, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Give to the needy and secret, and your Father who sees what you do in secret will himself reward you. Now what Josh have you always been taught that it means to give, but don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

What have you always been?

Josh Yates: Yeah, I think it's just, you give in secret and you just let people know, you know, you don't need to tell people what you're doing. So you just do it quietly. You drop the gift on the front porch and you walk away or you give, you give them the benevolence fund in the church is this, you know special giving people give to it, but people don't know, you know, who's given to that.

It's a special kind of grace offering

Bill Perkins: and you know what he had just said, don't do what the hypocrites. They give, they blow a trumpet. So everyone will, Hey man, look at what Josh or Bill game man look generous. But it never made sense to me the left-hand right-hand thing. So I was, I was I was talking to the Lord about this and I held up my right hand and I said, okay, so my right hand is giving the gift.

And then I put out my left hand and I'm not supposed to tell my left hand why.

So I don't applaud myself. Wow. Wow. This is taking it deeper. Jesus is saying don't only give in secret. So other people won't applaud. You don't even reflect on your generosity because if you do, you're applauding yourself. And if you applaud yourself, you just received your reward in full. Wow. Hmm. Think about it yourself.

Give it, and then pray God uses it .But do not reflect on your generosity. So this is the kind of insight that God has giving people. So when I get together with a group and I've been banging away every day with my little hand pick and that nugget of bill falls into my hand, that's a big nugget to me and I get together with my group and I go, man, look what God showed me.

And all of a sudden in that moment they experienced what you just did an aha wow moment. And then they come to me like, like the pastor in Canada, a young guy, I mean a young guy he's in his twenties or early thirties, young to me. Right. And we're talking about why did Jesus appear first to Mary Magdalen?

He could have appeared to so many other people, but he appeared first to a woman in a garden. Well, Bill, what other woman walked with God in the garden and what happened in her situation? Well, her name was Eve and she ate an apple and she gave it to her husband and it plunged the world into sin and the curse of death.

Hmm. Doesn't it make sense? Therefore, that the second Adam and he, this is his insight, not mine. That's the second Adam go read Romans five. The first Adam is Adam. And then Adam, all humanity fell into sin. The second Adam, Jesus Christ, who through his death paid the penalty of the curse in full. Rose from the dead to prove the curse had been broken and to announce a lie that the second Adam appears to the second Eve, Mary Magdalen, to announce resurrection, the breaking of the curse.

A pastor in Canada shares that with me and I grew up and it's like, boom. You didn't get that book. It's stunning. I mean, it's just. Every week somebody is being told something by the Holy Spirit that they bring to the group. And I'd say to your listeners, just read the story and listen. And I also say look, read it at a pace you're comfortable with 10 pages a day, gets me through it in a month because there's 350 pages and 20 of those pages are Dore images, but you read it at your pace.

Yeah, one guy said joking, I'm going to read a page a day and I go, praise God. Then I said, take you build through the genealogies really slowly. And

that guy came back with some phenomenal insights from the genealogy. Things I'd never known. It's there in, in, yes. Great outside resources are wonderful. I'm reading G Campbell Morgan's commentary on the gospel and it blows my mind.

The thing is the Lord shows him. So, yeah, man, I would say, just get into the story and read it. And as the Holy Spirit reveals something to you get some people together that you meet with every other week on Zoom. Yeah. And don't feel pressure, you know, there's no rush, read it at a pace that's comfortable for you, but read it every day.

Yeah,

Josh Yates: I love that. That's that's refreshing. I mean, you can work with anyone. Who's leading a group of middle school students to a group of senior saints in your church. I mean, it's, it's across the board and what, what greater emphasis of Christ shaping how we do ministry.

Bill Perkins: And I'm curious, a guy in Georgia bought a thousand books because he wants to get them into the Christian school there. They have a class on the life of Christ and he wants them to use this and Jesus Christ, The Greatest Life.

Josh Yates: Yeah. Well we're taking it through our, our staff. So our staff are gonna be walking through that from that we're doing a six month challenge with our team and stuff. I think that's the thing is, Hey, take your teams through this.

Take your, your, your disciples through his, take your church through this, because it's not a, it's not a program. It's not a curriculum. It's a person.

Bill Perkins: I want to, I want to share you. I want to share with you one more story. Because that's an important point. So, so we got this group in the in Zambia, Gary Bringer that, that story is Gary Ringer. And I go back to India where I uncover a misappropriation of funds by a guy in an Indian guy.

And in Gary and I became buddies because they had this mission over there, this orphanage over there. And, and it's an interesting story, but, but the basic thing is, is that we ended up becoming very close friends in a very short period of time. And he served on my board and but we hadn't talked. I helped him write a book, but, but we hadn't talked in years.

And Sandy, my wife used to listen to a Family Life Today every day, but she hadn't listened to it in years. And one day she turned it on. And Gary Ringer was being interviewed about this book I helped him with. And so I sent him an email and he called me and I told him what I was doing. And so we started meeting and, and so he has a vision that every leader and every child, 14 years and older, this speaks English will get a copy.

That's why they're printing 10,000 copies. And so, so we started this group. He wants all of his leaders. We start this group with two guys in Zambia and a guy from Ukraine. And and these guys are being trained where they, where they open these orphanages, if they can, they build farms to train them in a skill so that when they're graduating high school or college, they've got jobs.

And so I was talking about the the, this guy, he comes in with his observation, this 25 year old farmer, he says, well, I was reading about the cursing of the fig. As Jesus is coming into Jerusalem, you know, near the Passover and his crucifixion. And and he asked us, what did he cursed the fig tree?

I mean, it wasn't the season for figs and there were no figs. Why did he curse curses? So I gave him my answer, which is, I've heard that question before I was ready for that. Like, what do you think? Or Gary asked him, what do you think? And he said, well, he said, it says, there's one picture. And to cross pollinate, there must be two fig trees.

And there was no figs on that tree because there was no cross pollination. And he said, I think it symbolized the temple that he was about to cleanse for a second time. Because the temple is supposed to bear fruit. But

because it rejected Christ as the Messiah, there is no spiritual cross-pollination therefore it was fruitless and therefore he cleansed it.

You won't get that out of a commentary.

Josh Yates: Yeah, you're you're you're on my mind. You know, when it comes to these, these insights that we're so used to kind of like, Hey, here's what, you know, here's a systematic, you know, I gotta go down, I gotta find my book and here it is. But you go, okay, how did that person come to that awareness of that through study and the Holy Spirit's leading and guiding here it is.

Bill Perkins: Well, and the challenge that I give to you and the challenge I give to pastors or any other leader, that's a student of the scripture, don't give your answer first because they may have a better answer. What I've learned is that if, if I'm jumping in giving my answers, sometimes that can shut down conversation.

I want them to teach me. I want to know what is the Holy Spirit shown you that I haven't seen yet? And it's a pretty cool thing. For a guy who's only read the gospels a few times. To be teaching a guy who's read it over a hundred times. Things that never crossed my mind.

Josh Yates: Hmm. Yeah. Well I want to change gears here a little bit because I follow you on your blog and which has profound insights.

What were shared the links to that in the show notes. But it was probably about maybe six months ago, maybe a little longer. You had an article on the humanity of Christ. That I shared that with all my ministry leaders friends. So that's kind of spread through our our global network of ministry partners. Come back and go, man, that that was helpful because Sonlife, we want to do what Jesus did follow a pattern, Jesus given us.

And to do that, we have to understand that Christ then is our model for life and ministry. And his humanity actually is something maybe we don't really understand. Can you unpack maybe a little bit of just your understanding,

how, how has the humanity of Christ been aha moment for you as you've been studying and looking at Jesus.

Bill Perkins: Well, when I went to seminary and I thank God for my professors. They taught, I didn't know anything when I came in and they taught me a lot, but one of the things they taught me that I would contest now is that when Jesus did a miracle he acted out of his divine nature. And when he taught or disciplined, he taught out of his human nature.

So there's this kind of dichotomy. And in a very real sense, I would read the gospels and where Jesus would do miracles, I would teach that more as a sample of proof of his divine nature. But not as something that I could follow and it's kinda like I'm comfortable following Clark Kent up 20 flights of stairs.

I think I could do that by the way I worked 20 flights. But when he gets it's up to the top, the roof, any rips off his business and the suit, and all of a sudden you see the big "S" in the Cape and he leaps off that building and flies away. I'm not following him. And I, and I was following Clark.

And I didn't even realize I could follow Jesus, the Superman, the supernatural. And as you read through the gospels, you will notice at nowhere, nowhere in the gospels, does it say that Jesus Christ ever performed a miracle out of his divine nature? And in fact, in Philippians 2, the apostle Paul clearly declares that he lays aside the exercise of his divine attributes during the incarnation.

Now that's a very important statement. Yeah, it does not say he laid aside his divine nature. He did not. He laid aside the exercise of his divine nature. And the illustration I give people is this. Close your eyes for a moment. All your listeners close your eyes right now. With your eyes closed. Do you still have the capability of opening them and seeing?

Yes or no. Well, of course you're not blind. You just closed your eyes to the exercise of your vision. But you still have vision. You're just not using it. During the incarnation Jesus closed his eyes to the exercise of his divine

non-transferrable attributes. And that means attributes like omnipotence, omnipresence, you know immutability, he closed his eyes to all of these.

Now you retain his transferrable attributes, like love, mercy, justice, compassion, all of these, which he's also transferred to us. So, then how did he perform miracles? He said he performed miracles in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The same spirit that works in us. That's why he could say greater works than I've done. You will do also why? Because I go to the Father. So we have access to the same divine power source that Jesus Christ had. Now, the more I read it, the more I discovered, for instance, Jesus never prayed for anybody to be healed.

He commanded them to be. He gave us authority over evil spirits. He gave us authority to heal. Now someone might say, well, gosh, if I pray to someone to be healed in, they're not what then? My answer is, well, what if you pray for someone to be healed and they are what then what if I pray for them to be healed?

And they're not, what will they think of God? And I go, well, here's what I tell them. I pray for someone and they're not healed on the spot. Then I'll ask him. I say, you've been praying to be healed for a while, right. And they go, yeah. And I go, well, Jesus says, keep asking and you'll get your answer. So you are one prayer closer, keep asking.

That's good. If I pray for a hundred people and one person is healed, I'll pray for a hundred people to see one person healed. Yeah. And I've seen far more people healed by taking them through the process of breaking a stronghold and evicting evil spirits. I've seen some dramatic healings when strongholds are destroyed and demons are evicted in the authority of Jesus Christ. Because these are the guys that oftentimes cause these massive physical ailments and some of these healings have been very dramatic.

Wow. Oh, and medically authenticated. Oh, wow. No, it changes everything. It changes everything. And so for me, when I saw that girl heal back in

Louisiana, I thought there is a Jesus I do not know. And I'm going to spend the rest of my life, getting to know him, and I'm not going to be just relying on the great commentaries and the great authors and writers and expositors. Yes, I want what they have to say.

But I'm going to go to the source. I'm going to listen to the words of Jesus himself. I'm going to watch him perform these miracles and I'm going to do it every day by God's grace for the rest of my life. And it's powerful. It's so exciting.

Josh Yates: Yeah. Well, you wake up in the morning. You go, okay. God, what do you have for me?

Bill Perkins: I know. What do you want?

I know I haven't reviewed the sermon on the Mount today. I can't wait right now. I'm in there's 14 pages in the Jesus story and I've got page up to page nine pretty much, but after we view it morning and night, or I'll start forgetting. And and so I'm really eager to kind of get off this call so I can do my my 20 minute review of the sermon on that.

I've already read my 10 pages, but I haven't done my one minute review yet. And yeah. Yeah, man. It's like dessert. It's like my wife, one of the guys in Florida, he's, he's really prolific at duplicating. And his name is Nicholas and he was discouraged that some of the guys weren't, you know, doing their reading and stuff.

And kind of wanted to bring the hammer down on them. And I shared this with my wife, Cindy and Cindy said, that's not the motivation. The motivation is to taste and see that the Lord is good taste, read the gospels and taste, and you will see that the Lord is good.

Josh Yates: I think that is just the, the, the best conclusion I can think of this conversation. We can keep going on this for so many You know, hours, honestly opening it up and actually doing an example of walking through, Hey, what are you learning?

. Well Bill, where can people follow you? Where's where we can, may get a copy of this. What, you know, let's what would you encourage our listeners?

Bill Perkins: Well, the first and best and soft cover is not on Amazon. It's not on sale anywhere. So the best place, really to get it is your store.

Josh Yates: Sonlife will have a limited supply and we're working to try to replenish that. So we will, we'll

Bill Perkins: get there five minutes away. So we're in good shape there. They can go to readtheJesusstory.com to get the hard cover. The price point is higher. It's 35 bucks plus shipping. But it's also a piece of gold.

The soft cover is, is priced, you know, much lower. So I think that really you and your, and your website are going to be the best place to get the the soft cover.

Josh Yates: And then to follow you on your blog is bill

Bill Perkins: billperkins.com. [Billperkins.com](http://billperkins.com).

Josh Yates: Yeah. And by the way

Bill Perkins: that the readtheJesusstory.com, they can see a video.

Josh Yates: Well, bill, this has been yeah, a pleasure. And I'm looking forward to our next conversation and hearing the stories of what God's doing, an organic movement of disciple-making and that word duplicate. I just want to end with that, that, that our listeners would be inspired with duplicating their lives, the power of the work of Jesus Christ that we can do.

Bill Perkins: Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Close

Wayne Wrz: You know, Josh, every time after we come out of an interview, I call it a conversation because we want these to be conversations, but this one really felt like a genuine conversation with you and Bill.

I was wondering if there's something that you're going to take away from this conversation.

Josh Yates: Yeah. I, I really wish you all could have been in the room with us because we're obviously we're using technology using Zoom, but there was this that you said unique, like it was asked as if we weren't even watching it on a computer.

Wasn't I w it was this very personal, it was very real. It was very raw. And you can't, you can't make this stuff up. And there was a moment there for me that that was from when he used kind of shared the personal aha. When he came in contact with a person at work at Jesus.

I wish we could all have felt that because you could see his own countenance, his own demeanor, that he could tell that Jesus would, had really broken through to his heart.

And he was a new man and a new leader and a pastor who would now be able to shepherd and lead it because he has, he's been with Jesus. You could just tell his, his countenance, his face. He had spent time with the person. Right. But Jesus, it was, it was real.

Wayne Wrz: Hmm.

That's good. That's good. I know for me, one thing he said, he talked about like after being in ministry for 20 years. And, and teaching and preaching all that, his done his willingness to be able to continue to learn and continue to grow. And especially as, as he works through this resource, that he helped compile.

That he enjoys meeting with people and. And letting them go first and hearing what other people are learning. Not coming in as an expert, not

coming in as the leader, but coming in to learn and grow from those that he's walking through this study with.

I love that reminder as leaders that we're not above growth, we're not above learning that we should be walking this journey with people and learning from and alongside others.

So this resource, the Jesus story is, is a blended gospel. And Josh, I'm wondering, can you maybe tell us a little bit, maybe some of the benefits of using a blended gospels or harmony of the gospels? What, what are the benefits of using that kind of resource?

Josh Yates: Yeah, that's a great question, Wayne. And we could probably open up a whole another podcast just on that.

And maybe, maybe that's another conversation we can, we can explore because I don't claim to be an expert kinda in that.

And a couple of things. One is the Jesus story is very readable. I love it because there isn't any chapters and headings only handful of them in that kind of mark the year. So you kind of know you're at, in Jesus' ministry, but outside of that, you're reading as if it's a, it's a narrative as a story.

Right. So it's very readable, but in Sonlife, you know, we use the NIV Thomas and Gundry. Harmony. And that's very studyable. It's, it's more academic in nature because there's footnotes and there's things in there. And there's the back there's these essays and markers that tell you kind of why you want to read a harmonization of scripture.

And I think what a harmonization does or a blended gospel. It helps you to kind of see the full story. I think, and our Christian tradition, we're really good at telling the story every year, twice a year, typically Christmas, we know the Christmas nativity story really well forward and backwards.

And we know the end of the story, if you will, Jesus, his ministry, his death, burial, and resurrection. We tell that story every year in our Christian kind of calendar. But what happens. Hm. And I think sometimes we get lost

knowing, well, what did Jesus actually do more than just actually, what did he say?

So what did you just do that first year? What do you do that second year? A third year to help us understand how did Jesus actually train and equip disciple makers? I think the first assumption we might have is, oh, Hey, read Mark chapter one and see Jesus just starts in, he grabs 12 disciples and he begins his ministry will tell disciples.

Well, if we don't understand the timeline and understand the process before that, we might assume different , different conclusions. Right? We just all time in relationships. We're talking to somebody, you know, Hey, if they got married and had kids, we'll. When did you first meet? And if I were to say, Wayne, what's your story? You know, you're gonna start putting things kind of somewhat of an orderly account, right?

If it was all out of order, it would be hard to understand. We understand this and movies understand this and books. We understand that everywhere. If you turn on the news that they're going to tell you a story and the orderly events of the events that took place today. Well, the same thing in scripture and the life of Christ, what were the early events that took place.

And so I think a harmonization helps us kind of understand those periods of times, understand the bigger story.

Wayne Wrz: That's great. I think the harmonies are a great tool for, for looking at seeing that timeline, but are there any cautions we need when we use a harmony or,

Josh Yates: yeah, I don't think I mean, why don't we want to stay in to, to the to the inspire text?

We need to know the, the audience to which Matthew is writing to which Luke was, was his audience. And John, we need, we need to be in the text. I see this as, as a an incredible tool that comes alongside for us to understand it better. Because as, as Luke was writing he had a certain audience use.

He's putting things in a certain order, as we know, an orderly account. Is laying things out, particularly to give you the audience what to understand it. So, for example, in Luke, so in Luke, the genealogy of Luke happens in Luke chapter three, right before the temptation of Jesus and chapter a chapter four.

So why did Luke put the genealogy of Jesus before the temptation of Jesus? I think he's telling you a story. There's a purpose, his intention. Right. Well, if you look at the NIV, the CR the harmony harmony, it has all the genealogies lined up next to each other, which is great.

Cause you can study them side by side, but there, you know, it to kind of go back to, okay, well, why did it look put that there? So I think it's important to stay in the original text to understand what that looks like. But as well as the, the harmony kind of puts it side by side, so you can understand the context and the, and the different verbiage, different words, how, how it lays out.

It's a tool, but I gotta make sure that we're still in the, in the text.

Wayne Wrz: That's so good. And for you listeners, we have 10 copies of the Jesus Story that we want to give away. And all you need to do is send us an email. So the first 10 of you to send an email to podcast@sonlife.Com, just tell us your name and a shipping address, and we will get those in the mail to you.

And if you're not one of the first 10 to send this email there, we will have the Jesus story available on our store website for purchase. We think it's a great tool. It's a good read. It's a good way to just get to know the person and the work of Jesus. So that's what we have for you today.

Thank you for taking the time to listen. And here's our disciple making moment.

Disciple Making Moment

Val O'Brien: Hi, this is Val O'Brien area coordinator in Cleveland, Ohio. And this is my disciple-making moment. You know, one thing I started as a couple of years ago, but I play softball on Friday nights. I call it affectionately adult little league. And so we've been back after the pandemic playing, it's been a ton of fun.

We usually grab a bite to eat after our game and. We were out at a restaurant afterwards and was just talking and chitchatting with my teammates. And one of them said, yeah, You know, at work this past week, one thing that's really been blowing me away. We have all of these summer interns and this next generation is just so different.

They're so strange. And of course my ears perked up because I talked a lot about like the intergenerational ministry stuff. Intergenerational disciple-making for Sonlife. So of course I'm like keyed in now to this conversation. And he goes, you know, we're sitting around at lunch with these interns and these kids, call them kids, bring up religion, politics and their salaries all at lunch at a business lunch.

And he was just blown away by that. He's like, I'm sitting on my hands going, like, don't you guys know that this isn't the stuff that we talk about. But he was saying how just different and in some ways refreshing, that is how this next generation is just kind of willing to go there.

Where a lot of the generation. Over them, haven't been, you know, and I actually had a similar experience just this past week. I was kind of at a situation with this high school girl. And we were just kind of waiting around and chit chatting and stuff like that. And before he knew it faith came up where she went to church, came up.

This girl. And I ended up, we didn't even know each other, we ended up having a 20 minute conversation about what she believes, what I believe, why I believe it. And I ended up being able to share the gospel with this girl.

And here's my point is sometimes we're just too afraid. We're too afraid to bring up Christianity, religion.

We're afraid that we'll be these like pushy Christians and stuff like that. And I want you to flip your thinking about that, especially in terms of this younger generation. They're talking about it anyway. They're hungry for it. We need to be prayerful and we need to be humble. And we need to be compassionate when we're talking to them. But we also just need to go for it and feel that freedom to go for it and to be bold to talk about Jesus they're, they're hungry for it.

They're talking about it anyway, and what a cool opportunity we have as people that love Jesus, love people want to see them come to know him and have their life transformed by him. To be able to speak into that. Especially to this next generation. So be prayerful and be bold and talking about Jesus, especially with these young people.