

Introduction: How you respond to invitations shapes who you are

Invitation #1 – Come to Me

²⁸ “*Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.*” ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ *For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*”

Matthew 11:28-30

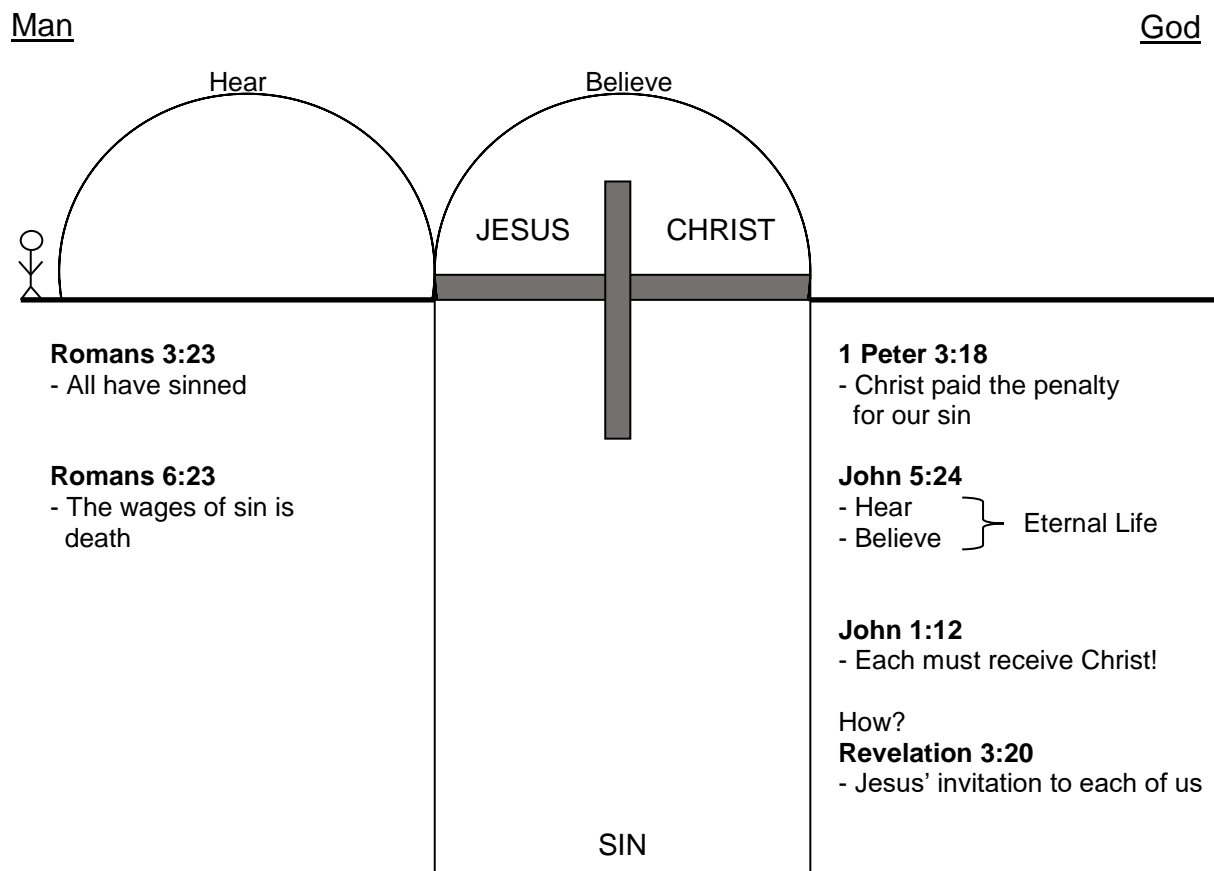
1. There’s an **INVITATION**.
2. The audience is people that have **EARS** to **HEAR**.
3. There’s a promise of **REST**.
4. There’s a process of taking up His **YOKE** and learning from Him.

The Four Great Invitations (Part 1)

Lessons from My First 50 Years with Jesus

Come to Me
Matthew 11:28-30
John 5:24

The bridge illustration



"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

John 5:24

Discussion Questions:

1. What invitations have you said “yes” to that have positively impacted your life? Negatively?
2. What in Chip’s story caused you to think more deeply about your own journey with Jesus? Why?
3. How is “Coming to Jesus” both a first-time event and an ongoing process?
4. What temptations, lies, people, or situation’s keep you from coming to Jesus?
5. What specifically would it look like for you to “Come to Jesus” today in your life and relationship with Him?

The Four Great Invitations (Part 2)

Lessons from My First 50 Years with Jesus

Follow Me
Luke 5:1-11, 9:23-25

Review:

Invitation #1 → Come to Me

Matthew 11:28-30

The promise = Peace, rest, wholeness, guidance, acceptance.

Invitation #2 → Follow Me = An intentional apprenticeship to Luke 6:40

“...Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Matthew 4:19

Context of the invitation:

- Peter already believed Jesus was the Messiah. John 1:40-42
- Peter witnessed Jesus' power and love. Luke 4:38-44
- Peter's personal invitation. Luke 5:1-11

¹ Now it happened that while the **crowd was pressing around Him** and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; ² and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. ³ And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began **teaching the people** from the boat. ⁴ When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ Simon answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets." ⁶ When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break; ⁷ so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and **filled both of the boats**, so that they began to sink. ⁸ But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!" ⁹ For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken; ¹⁰ and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And **Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men."** ¹¹ When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

Luke 5:1-11

What did Jesus teach Peter to follow?

Answer

- His **DEPENDENCY** – John 5:30
- His **MISSION** – Luke 19:10
- His **HEART** – Matthew 25:34-46
- His teaching – Matthew 7:26
- His **MOTIVES** – John 4:34
- To **DIE** well – John 12:24
- His **RESURRECTION** – Luke 22:29-30

Peter's Journey

Crawl → Leaves all

Walk → Boat

Stand → “Declares!”

Stumble → Rebukes Jesus

Fall → Betrays

Crawl → Forgiven

Walk → Restored

Run → Leads/Teaches others

Jesus invites you to follow Him

²³ And He was saying to them all, “If anyone **wishes to come after Me**, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. ²⁴ For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. ²⁵ **For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?**

Luke 9:23-25

Discussion Questions:

1. What characterized those who accepted Jesus' invitation to follow Him?
2. Who do you know that exemplifies following Jesus the way the disciples did?
3. What did the disciples see and believe about Jesus that motivated them "to leave everything to follow Jesus"? What are the rewards? (Mark 10:29-31)
4. What in Chip's story encouraged you to follow Jesus despite the cost and challenges to be faithful to Him?
5. What specific steps do you sense God is calling you to take today to fully follow Jesus and His good plan for your life?

Introduction: The Christian life is not a matter of doing more or behaving better. It's a matter of going **DEEPER**.

Invitation #1 → Come to Me

The promise = Peace, rest, wholeness, guidance, and acceptance.

Invitation #2 → Follow Me

The promise = Purpose, direction, meaning, and fulfillment.

Invitation #3 → ABIDE IN ME = Intentionally staying connected to Jesus.

The promise = Freedom, joy, power, and fruitfulness.

Why it's hard to abide:

1. **DISTRACTIONS**
2. **DISTORTED DESIRES**
3. **DISCOURAGEMENT**

Context of the invitation

John 13-17

Chapter 13 – The Lord’s Supper and Jesus washes the disciples’ feet.

Chapter 14 – Jesus is going to prepare a place.

Chapter 15 – Jesus uses a metaphor to say, “I’m leaving physically, but I want you to stay connected to Me.

Chapter 16 – Jesus says, “The Holy Spirit is going to dwell in you and manifest My presence.”

Chapter 17 – Jesus is praying for the disciples and for us.

¹ “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ **Abide in Me**, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it **abides** in the vine, so neither can you unless you **abide in Me**. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; he who **abides in Me** and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not **abide in Me**, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. ⁷ If you **abide in Me**, and My words **abide** in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. ⁹ Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; **abide in My love**. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will **abide in My love**; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and **abide** in His love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”

John 15:1-11

What did Jesus teach the disciples about abiding?

The answer (John 15:1-11)

A metaphor (v.1)

A process (v.2-5)

A warning (v.6)

A promise (v.7)

The outcome (v. 8-10)

The purpose (v. 11)

Disciples – “process to abide”

Fearful – Confused, anxious

Failure – They flee

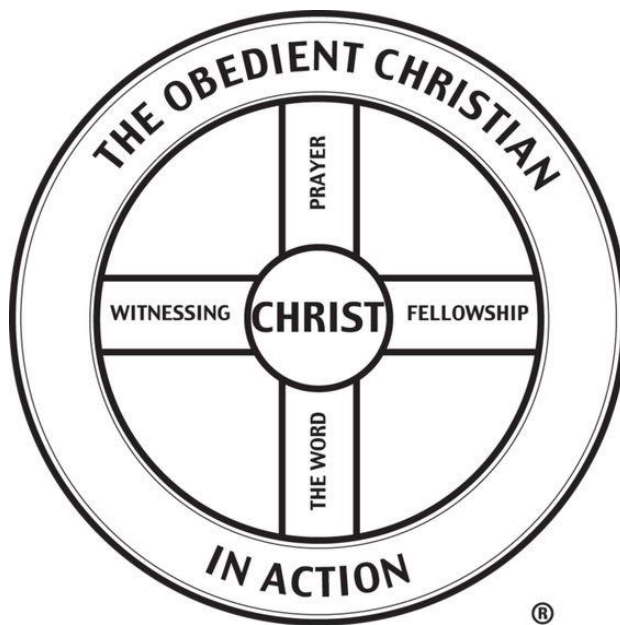
Hopeful – Death defeated

Promises – Trust His Word

Prayer – Receive power of the Holy Spirit

Preach – Acts 2, fruit

Jesus invites you to abide in Him



*The Wheel Diagram – created by Navigator
founder Dawson Trotman in 1930*

WHEEL ILLUSTRATION

- ⇒ The wheel serves as a guide in our own personal growth, and as a basis for abiding in Christ.
- ⇒ A wheel is dynamic, always moving.
- ⇒ When a wheel moves the hub is seen, not the spokes; power comes from the hub.
- ⇒ Balanced spokes make for a smooth and directed ride.
- ⇒ The emphasis of the spokes is relationship. Love is the goal.
- ⇒ Vertically, between God and us.
- ⇒ Horizontally, between people and us.
- ⇒ Obedience is where the rubber hits the road.
- ⇒ A wheel moves in a particular direction. As the wheel of the Christian life moves, ask yourself:
 - Why is it going (purpose)?
 - Where is it going (goal)?

Discussion Questions:

1. Why did Jesus teach about abiding at this point in His ministry?
2. Why is it so critical to stay connected to Jesus and His power daily?
3. What are your biggest challenges/barriers to abiding in Jesus?
4. What in Chip's story was most encouraging, helpful, or new to you?
5. What specific step do you need to take this week to abide? Who will you ask to help you make and keep your commitment?

Review:

Invitation #1 → Come to Me

Invitation #2 → Follow Me

Invitation #3 → Abide in Me

Invitation #4 → **GO MAKE DISCIPLES** = An unspeakable privilege to join Jesus in His rescue mission to bring life, light, and love to a broken world.

“...the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”

John 20:21

Context

¹⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ **Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,** ²⁰ **teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”**

Matthew 28:18-20

3 Timeless principles from Jesus:

Luke 6:39-41

1. You cannot **IMPART** what you do not **POSSESS**. (v. 39)
2. More is **CAUGHT** than **TAUGHT**. (v. 40)
3. We must “**BE**” what we want others to “**BECOME**.” (v. 41)

Become a Romans 12 Christian

(A grace-based relational profile of an authentic follower of Jesus)

5 Key relationships – r12 Biblical responses:

1. Relationship with God – **SURRENDER** to God.

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

Romans 12:1

2. Relationship with the world – **SEPARATE** from the world.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:2

3. Relationship with yourself – **SOBER** self-assessment.

³ For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. ⁴ For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; ⁷ if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Romans 12:3-8

4. Relationship with believers – **SERVING** in love.

⁹ Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; ¹¹ not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹² rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, ¹³ contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

Romans 12:9-13

5. Relationship with nonbelievers – **SUPERNATURALLY** responding to evil with good.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. ¹⁷ Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. ¹⁹ Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord. ²⁰ “BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:14-21

A new paradigm to consider:

- The power of a “to be” list.
- 4 key words: objective, prioritize, schedule, discipline

3 Relationships to pursue:

1. A Paul – to learn from.
2. A Timothy – to invest in.
3. A Barnabas – to do life with.

The Four Great Invitations: A Personal Assessment of Your Journey with Jesus

Where Are You in This Process?

Growth is hard to quantify. Christlikeness is even harder, especially since measuring ourselves against Jesus always reveals that we are significantly short of the goal. But transformation is nevertheless noticeable. We recognize the difference between before-and-after pictures, between a caterpillar and a butterfly, or between a seed and a harvest.

Transformation looks like people who have been lost, broken, or stuck becoming loved, healed, and free—and eager to offer what God has given them to others.

Where are you on the path of transformation? The following diagnostic tool will help you assess where you are—again, not in or-der to get lost in introspection, lament your lack of change, or make you feel like a failure, **but to get a clear idea of where you’re going from here.** It will give you some perspective on your transformation into the image of Christ and, I hope, be an encouragement one day when you look back and see how far you’ve come.

Rank yourself (or better yet, ask a friend to help rank you) on the scale from 0% to 100% in the following areas. Don’t worry if you aren’t completely sure what to mark; this is a tool for personal reflection and discussion with fellow believers.

1.) I am currently involved in activities and training that are equipping me to do the work of the ministry.

<u>Never</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Sporadically</u>	<u>Consistently</u>
0%	10-15%	50-60%	90-100%

2.) I am regularly participating in intentional, meaningful, biblical worship.

<u>Never</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Sporadically</u>	<u>Consistently</u>
0%	10-15%	50-60%	90-100%

3.) I am currently in an apprentice or mentoring relationship with an older believer who is stimulating my spiritual growth.

<u>Never</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Sporadically</u>	<u>Consistently</u>
0%	10-15%	50-60%	90-100%

4.) I am currently ministering and building into the lives of others.

<u>Never</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Sporadically</u>	<u>Consistently</u>
0%	10-15%	50-60%	90-100%

5.) I am becoming more like Christ, as evidenced by a desire to read God’s Word, a disciplined study and understanding of His Word, and an ability to see through false teaching.

<u>Never</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Sporadically</u>	<u>Consistently</u>
0%	10-15%	50-60%	90-100%

6.) I am becoming more like Christ, as evidenced by enjoying one or more deep, authentic Christ-centered relationships.

<u>Not Currently</u>	<u>1-2</u>	<u>3 or more</u>
0%	50-60%	90-100%

7.) I am currently in a small group where speaking the truth in love is common. I have three or four gut-level accountability relationships that are helping me through the most sensitive areas of my life.

<u>Not Currently</u>	<u>Hit and miss</u>	<u>3 or more</u>
0%	50-60%	90-100%

8.) I am becoming more like Christ, as evidenced by a desire to become more deeply involved with God’s people, to worship, to learn, to serve, and to meet the needs of others. I have a clear sense that I fit in the body of Christ. I am loved by others, and I find myself caring and helping them in increasing measure.

<u>Never</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Significantly</u>	<u>Yes</u>
0%	10-15%	50-60%	90-100%

9.) I am becoming more like Christ, as evidenced by compassion for and acts of service on behalf of “the least of these” (Matt. 25:40, 45)—those who need provision of food, clothing, shelter, and other acts of mercy.

<u>Never</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Significantly</u>	<u>Yes</u>
0%	10-15%	50-60%	90-100%

10.) I am following Jesus’ Great Commission by sharing God’s love verbally and as a lifestyle to make disciples and witness to the gospel (Matt 28:19–20).

<u>Never</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Significantly</u>	<u>Yes</u>
0%	10-15%	50-60%	90-100%