



# Life to Life Investment

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# Life to Life Investment

Jesus is calling us to be part of His vision by investing in the lives of others. We all know how important individuals and relationships have been in our own faith and He wants us to join Him through His Spirit in His work of making disciples.

The amazing news in Hebrew 10 is that Jesus is our great high priest who has sacrificed His own blood for us and made a way through His body for us to come into the holy presence of God. Therefore, we come to Him cleansed from guilt and washed with pure water. We can know Him intimately and live in His presence with His presence living in us. These are the words that follow:

*Hebrews 10 (ESV): 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

We know that “He who promised is faithful” to keep us and lead us in life in him. **We are to live cleansed in close personal relationship with Jesus, but in order to do that we need each other.** These verses say we must be in a habit of meeting together, not a habit of not meeting together.

It is important to meet as a body together, but we also see over and over in the Gospels the Jesus who meets with individuals. Time after time Jesus singles out someone in the crowd and takes them aside. Or while the whole crowd is watching, He tenderly ministers to one. Consider the account of the woman who was bleeding for 12 years. She knew Jesus could heal her just

by touching His robe. But Jesus wanted to meet her personally and speak healing and peace into her life (see Mark 5:25-34).

We watch Jesus as He goes to eat in the homes and speaks with people face to face. We also see Him teaching, correcting and praying for the disciples as individuals.

In our walk with Jesus, one of the ways that we experience the personal attention of the Jesus who loves us and the Father who knows what we need is through the individual attention of believers. Jesus calls us to love others as He has loved us. He also calls us to serve one another in the way He has served us and shows us a picture of that in washing the disciples' feet (John 13).

We see examples of leaders connecting with individuals in the New Testament letters (such as Paul with Timothy).

Therefore, as those who are growing in Christ we need to ask the Holy Spirit to lead us to someone who will grow in Him by our love and attention. He will answer if we pray about who that could be.

## Why Me?

Often, we feel this is the role of the pastor, the youth leader or other leaders but Jesus will show us it is the role of all of us. All kinds of people with all kinds of personalities and experiences as well as gifts are needed to be **friends**. This is part of being the “body of Christ” and far from being the role of trained leaders. We all have a role to be friends with others in Christ and to be the children of God under the same heavenly Father. As brothers and sisters in Christ we need to get alongside each other as we walk with Him. It may be that they are younger than us in age or just at a different point in their spiritual maturity.

Sometimes we think to invest in others means that we are perfect and have no struggles; people can learn from our wonderful example. This is a lie that will keep us from ever coming alongside anyone or will lead us to do it in pride and our own strength. Either way we need to know the truth that Jesus can use anyone. He will often use the way we cling to Jesus and depend on Him in our weakness to lead others into His life.

## In Whom Do We Invest?

They may be younger than us in years or just younger in the faith. They may be potential leaders themselves but they may just need someone to walk with them as they struggle to know what is to live for Jesus. We need to pray Jesus will lead us to the right person. They may come to us or we may need to initiate the meeting. The Father knows when it is right for us and for them and He knows their histories, experiences, personalities, needs along with their future. We can trust Him to lead if we ask Him.

## How Long Should This Last?

Investing in a life may last for six months or a lifetime. We may need to commit long term or we may just offer six months. The Lord knows what we can do and how we will be available. We need to pray and ask Him how to begin. What we don't want is to promise what we cannot maintain or offer something that will not be received as a genuine love and support.

## What Do We Do?

The phrase "life to life investment" helps us understand that when we connect our lives with another believer we are welcoming the life of Christ. There is a miracle that happens through the Holy Spirit when we make time for someone and space in our hearts to pray for them—The Risen Lord Jesus stands between us.

As they connect with us, they need to be drawn closer to Jesus and into His life for them. They need to be opening their hearts to Jesus living in them. This helps us to see a whole new perspective of what could happen and our role in it.

## What Is Our Role?

We are not trying to attract people or draw them into our love for them.

We are not trying to make people dependent on us.

We are not trying to make people be like us.

We are not trying to show a perfect example for them to follow.

We do not have the wisdom to teach them in ourselves.

We do not have any way to “fix them.”

So, if that is *not* what we are trying to do, then what are we trying to do?

*1 Thessalonians 2: 7 Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, 8 so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.*

If Jesus is standing between us, then we should:

Care deeply for others. Paul likens this tender love to a nursing mother. That is not a thing to be taken lightly and our love must come from the Holy Spirit and reflect something of the love God has for any individual. Many people have had terrible experiences of parents or family and struggle to understand how God’s love looks. His love is more than just a scheduled meeting or making someone a “project.” Our first motivation should be a love that is not seeking to make

ourselves feel important or give ourselves a significant role or help keep us busy, but a love that is focused on the other. These verses in 1 Thessalonians 2 also say that because of that love they shared the Gospel of God along with their lives.

In any relationship, we need to make sure we are sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Savior who has brought us back into relationship with a Holy God.

## What Is Our Goal?

**This means that our main goal is to show love and share our lives in a way that draws people into deeper relationship with God.** This is the core of anything we do:

- We are trying to point people to Jesus and pray they will be drawn into His love for them.
- We are trying to help people become dependent on Jesus through the Holy Spirit.
- We are trying to encourage people be like Jesus by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in them.
- We point them to Jesus as the only perfect example of life with God.
- We do have the Word of God as wisdom to teach them and we can ask the Holy Spirit to lead us in how to handle the Word in the way that is just right for them.
- We do have the opportunity to pray for them and to pray with them and to encourage them to learn to pray so that Jesus can “fix them” and make them whole by His forgiveness, healing, freedom, and His Spirit to lead them.

## How Do We Invest?

So how do we work out these relationships so that Jesus really is standing between us and it is His life that is shared through ours? How do we guard against trying to fix people or make them dependent on us?

**Any investment should be a genuine relationship and not a strategy or a schedule.** Every person and all their circumstances and history are different. Whatever we do needs to fit the personality type, spiritual maturity, schedule and age of the person Jesus brings us to share with. However, there are some guiding principles that will help us:

*1 Thessalonians 2: 2 We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers.*

**We need to commit to praying for the person.** If we don't do this, it is hard to love out of the love of Jesus. We will only see their needs through our own eyes. When we pray for them we begin to see them through God's eyes and to listen to His heartbeat for them. Whenever we are together or talking on the phone it is important to pray with them. In this way we literally invite Jesus to stand between us and welcome Him into the relationship. We also show clearly that it is Jesus who wants to meet them, help them, heal them, free them, teach them and lead them. We always need to pray as we think about what will be in the time together and ask the Holy Spirit to lead us in what they need that day. We need to welcome His presence and then when we part, to pray that He will continue to speak to them and minister His presence.

*1 Thessalonians 2: 13 And we also thank God continually because, when you received the Word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.*



**At the heart of the relationship is the Word of God in Scripture.** Otherwise we will share out of our own personality and experience in our own strength. Our words do not have any power and will only be “human word.” This verse encourages us that the Word of God will be “at work in you.” His Word in Scripture is living and active to change hearts, break lies, lead in the truth and draw them into Christ’s life. We want to encourage them to read Scripture themselves, so having it before we meet together is good. Let them write down responses or questions to Scripture if that is helpful for them so that when you meet they feel prepared and relaxed.

“The Word” may be in the form of a Bible study together or it could be that you read the same Scripture at home then talk about it or pray through it. It could be that you only think on one verse each time and encourage memorizing it and praying it. It may be more that you listen to the needs and the feelings of an individual and try to find Scriptures that will speak specifically into their circumstances. It will probably be that we do a combination of these depending on what is needed at the time.

**In the relationship we build through meeting, calls, emails or texting we need to be sharing our “lives.”** To some degree we need to be willing to be honest about our experiences and how we are in our own relationship with Jesus through reading the Bible and prayer. This makes the relationship two-way and a more authentic friendship. It will also point them to Jesus and encourage them to grow in his love if they can see how we have trusted Him and listened to Him ourselves and continue hold fast.

**It is good to share our joys and our struggles** (within appropriate boundaries). They may be the very ways that people find they can “hold unswervingly to the hope” (Hebrews 10), even in doubt or confusion. When

we honestly share our lives, we are showing them that Jesus wants to be King of every detail of our lives and He wants to fill us with His life and lead us in His goodness. If they don't see us talk about anything but church or watch us interacting very impersonally with Scripture, they will get a very different message of how Jesus wants to work intimately in them through the Holy Spirit.

*John 13: 34 A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.*

**Jesus loved his disciples in the very ordinary and personal things of their lives.** He met them when they were fishing, He shared meals with them and after He was raised from the dead He even cooked breakfast for them. He went to his friend's funeral and sat with the mourners. He was concerned when people were weary and hungry and multiplied food for thousands. Jesus often spent time in the homes of those He was trying to reach. He sacrificed his life for us and this is the supreme love that He showed, but His love reaches us right where we are today. If we are to love as Jesus loves, we need to show the same type of interest and meet people just where they are. We need to grow friendships that are enjoyable and real. It may be through attending something they are involved in like sports or concerts. It may be going into their space to meet them in their own house, school, favorite coffee shop or ice cream place. It may be taking an interest in something important to them like their hobby, work or studies. If they have a family, it could be getting to know their children or bringing a meal so they don't have to cook one day. It could be that what they really need is a break from their environment and time in a quiet place like your house or a church room. Jesus showed us a model of genuine love in the ordinary. Whatever it takes to meet them where they are, know

their own world or listen to their needs, will be eternal, “Kingdom-time” well spent.

If we want to have Jesus as the center and draw them to dependence on Him, how can we make sure we are doing that?

- Pray before sharing our experience or any advice. Ask the Holy Spirit what they really need to hear and what is He is doing in their lives. We don't have to answer questions straight-away. You can say, “Let me find some good Scriptures for us to talk for when we meet next.”
- Be willing to send Scripture by text or email.
- Pray in every meeting, even on the phone or “Facetime.”
- Pray Scripture where you can so it is not even your prayers on which they may depend.
- Don't be afraid to say, “I think you need to ask the Lord about that,” and point them to personal time with Him.
- Take time to share things that have helped you have a personal relationship with Jesus and encourage them to make time for that.
- Give gifts that will be useful reading or offer verses to pray over. There may be Bible studies, reading plans or prayer helps that would give them ideas.
- If they have a busy life, help them make time for Jesus by bringing a meal or babysitting their kids.

***Ephesians 4: 2** Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

**We will need to be patient and love them just as they are, through the strength of the Holy Spirit.** We will need to spend time listening. We need to pray for Jesus to do works of setting them free from bondage, healing the past and setting them free from sin in the power of the Holy Spirit. However, we must not reject them or seem to withdraw our love if they do not change as we had hoped on our timeline. Keep praying and keep telling them the Father loves them and wants more for them.

**If you see things that concern you or shock you in their behavior or relationships pray before you say anything.** Be careful to point them to what Scripture says in a loving way, offering to pray and walk with them. Do not just tell them what is wrong or tell them how they should be. Then you will be “speaking the truth in love.”

Use Scripture, even when you pray or text Scripture as part of your prayers. Let them know that you are praying a particular Scripture for them in your own prayer times.

If they ask for you to help in a specific area and you feel that will distract them from what the Lord is leading them into or cause them to focus on you and be dependent on you rather than Jesus, it is okay to say no. Pray about the words to say and be careful and honest, but let Jesus lead the relationship as He wants.

We need to want what the Lord wants for them. There may be particular areas we could help in because of our gifts and experience and the Holy Spirit will make these connections, but there are some things that God wants for all of us and we need to want them for anyone we connect with through Him. Praying Scripture is not only taking up the Sword of the Spirit and a powerful way to pray but it also leads us to pray much bigger prayers in line with God’s own will. We can pray and

ask the Lord for specific Scriptures personal to those we are investing in. Here are some important ones:

***Ephesians 3: 16** I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, **18** may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, **19** and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

### What Is Our Desire?

We want them to fill them with his spirit so Christ will dwell in their hearts as they trust him (16).

We want them to receive the love of God, no matter what they have experienced of human love (18).

We want them to know his love and be filled with all the fullness of God (19).

***Titus 3: 4** But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, **5** he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, **6** whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

We want them to know the saving love of Jesus (4).

We want them to receive his forgiveness and grace at the cross (5a).

We want them to be washed by his blood and born into new life (6).

We want them to know renewal by the Holy Spirit (7).

***Ephesians 3: 16** I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. **17** I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better. **18** I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, **19** and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength **20** he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated Him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, **21** far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.*

We want them to know Him through His Spirit in them (17).

We want them to live in Him, and He in them - the power of the risen, exalted Jesus who is Lord over all (19).

We want them to believe the hope of eternity and their inheritance of life and truth in Him forever.

***Galatians 2: 20** I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

We want them to be crucified with Christ so they no longer live for self.

We want them to live by faith in Christ and be certain He has given Himself for them so that they want to give all of themselves to Him.

We want them to be free from self-will and self-interest so that Christ can live in them.

**Colossians 2: 6** *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. 8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.*

We want them to allow Christ to be Lord of their hearts, lives, their families (6).

We want them to live rooted and built up in him, strengthened in faith and full of thanks to God (7).

We want them to live in his truth so that no ideas or dark spiritual forces of the world can influence them (8).

In these relationships of life to life investment as in anything else we do for Jesus, this we need to remember what He says to us:

**John 15: 4** *(NASB) 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.*

We need to keep abiding in Jesus and anything we do must be in His heart, in His name, through Him and not in our own strength. He promises to bring the fruit when we are truly remaining in Him, and He in us. We cannot produce fruit in the lives of others, and praying constantly is the only way we will welcome Him to bring forth fruit within them.

## Ideas for meeting times, places and ways to build friendship:

- Having your meeting over food, away or at your house—possibly cooking together.
- Meeting over breakfast or drinking tea early in the morning together.
- Meeting over the phone, Skype, or Facetime.
- Writing letters, emails and journals to give Scriptures, prayers and encouragements and questions.
- Walking while you meet.
- Talking over crafting or woodworking.

## Other ideas for life to life investment:

- Giving books/devotionals and highlighting sections or writing in notes to personalize them.
- Texting Bible verses and encouragement in a group text can cause good group conversation.
- Offering babysitting or helping with chores and cooking.
- Serving together- at nursing homes, serving dinner to the economically challenged, and other volunteer opportunities, (serving together is very important).
- Hosting tea parties for others or at nursing homes.
- Going to a sports event or concert together.