

Here Jesus uses agricultural metaphor to describe people who are *sent by God* to help other people find true spiritual life.

Here is the key, it's God who does the drawing of people to Himself, and it's God who sends people out to be part of that process. Based on the two Bible verses above, it makes sense to pray what we have come to call, "The 5-second prayer":

"Father, draw the heart of this person to yourself and make her a kingdom laborer!"

We see praying this way as a way of life, rather than an activity. We call it the "Pray&Watch Lifestyle." This kind of prayer includes us in the miracles that God is doing to draw people to himself everyday.

As we tell stories of how God is working all around us, in us, and through us as we pray. Then we will pray together...

- The Life Group coach prays the 5 Second Prayer.
- Every group member simply speaks the first names of everyone they can think of, all at the same time, out loud.

In a very short time we pray for scores, even hundreds of people we love (and some we don't!). It is the most significant request we could ask of our God who loves us all, and longs to draw us into life, hope, peace, and purpose for living!

In preparation for this time, write down 5 names of people in your sphere of influence that we could pray for together:



**For the week starting Sunday,
February 21st 2016**

**My hope is built on nothing
less than Jesus' blood and
righteousness.**

Life-giving Prayer (about 10 min)

1. Do you have any stories to share this week about worshiping God in the everyday stuff of life?
2. Let's do an exercise to see if we can pick out the difference between giving God glory, honor, and thanks. Remember:
 - Giving God Glory is telling God what is amazing about him.
 - Giving God Honor is submitting to and choosing him.
 - Giving God Thanks is recognizing God's goodness towards us.

Read the following verses and decide what kind of prayer it is – glory, honor, or thanks:

Rom. 11:33, Matt. 26:39, Ps. 56:3, Rom. 1:8, Ps. 72:18, Matt. 11:25

3. Spend some time in Life-giving Prayer. An idea would be to go around in a circle, each person doing a one sentence prayer of giving God glory, then go around again doing honoring prayer, then go around again giving thanks.

Life-giving Truth (about 45-55 min)

There are a lot of questions here. Your Life Group Coach will pick out a few below that are best suited for your Life Group to help process this week's Life-giving Truth. Don't try to answer every question – just think through a few together.

1. Last week's truth: Did you think about last week's Life-giving Truth *The way is hard that leads to eternal life*? **Was there a situation in your life this week when this Life-giving Truth was (or could have been) applicable?**
2. It is true, of course, that no one enters the Kingdom of Heaven because of his obedience (for no one could be obedient enough. Matthew 5:20). It is equally true that no one enters the Kingdom of Heaven who is not obedient. Jesus says that “only the one who does the will of my Father” will enter heaven (7:21). The opposite of doing the Father's will is being a “worker of lawlessness” (7:23). This “will of my Father” is what Jesus has been telling us throughout Matthew 5-7. From these chapters, point out or summarize what doing the will of the Father looks like.
3. By saying “not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven,” Jesus is claiming to be the judge of mankind. Look at these passages: Acts 10:42; Acts 17:31, Rom 2:16, 2 Tim. 4:1, 8. While some people might fool themselves and others on earth, Jesus knows those who have a true relationship with him. Does the fact that Jesus is the all-knowing, all-powerful Judge concern you or make you fearful? Why or why not?
4. Sara says, “I'm just not that concerned about living a super-holy life. Nobody's perfect anyway. I know I don't look like much of a Christian, but I do believe Jesus is my only hope and I'm trusting him to forgive my sins.” In considering your answer, look at John 14:15, 2 Tim. 2:19, and Hebrews 12:14. If Sara would flat-out ask you, “Do you think I'm a Christian?” what might you say to her or talk to her about?
5. Doing the Father's will is necessary to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, although such obedience is not the ground of our acceptance before God. Whereas the Christian rightly sings “*My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus name*” a false believer might instead feel that “*My hope is built on nothing less than righteous deeds that I possess; I love what God has done in me, I'm right with God you must agree.*” Knowing the pitfall of pride that tempts us to trust in our own good works, what are the things you could be tempted to look at in your life and say “there – that's confirmation I'm a Christian”? In other words, where does pride most easily take root in your life?

6. Think about the phrase “my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood...”. Your neighbor Karl said, “I was watching an Alan Jackson program rerun and he sang a song called, 'Are you washed in the blood of the lamb'. What in the world is that about? What does it mean to be washed in the blood?” How would you explain to a non-Christian the significance of Jesus “blood” and having your hope in the “blood”?

Life-giving Relationships (about 5-10 min)

Does anyone want healing prayer this week? Remember, this is praying for the heart of you, the person, not the circumstances you are going through or other people in your life. Is there anything churning in your heart that we can pray for?

Life-giving Impact (about 10 min)

Since Life-giving Impact might be new to you, you could read through the section below from the booklet Discover the Life which explains a bit about this practice:

Most of us want to make a difference. It's part of what it means to find what's worth living for. It's part of being human.

Life-giving Impact is based on the belief that what everyone needs most is to figure out where they stand with God. It invites us to discover the thrill of giving the gift of faith to others in a respectful and unobtrusive way. It offers us an ever-deepening connection with the one true God, which the Bible clearly reveals can only be found in Jesus.

Acts 4:12: And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.

But people can only receive the truth about Jesus by the work of God's Spirit inside of them, drawing them to Himself. We find the words of Jesus quoted in...

John 6:44 “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.”

Many believers in Jesus have made mistakes in our well-intended efforts to share our faith with others. God doesn't ask us to argue with or change people, and he made it clear that we have no business ever judging each other. We simply pray that God would do, what only he can do, to draw people he loves into relationship with himself.

He also invites us to ask Him to give those same people a passion for others to know him too, so they will live as laborers for the sake of others who are yet to believe.

Again, it was Jesus, who said,

*Matthew 9:36-38 “**Ask** the Lord of the harvest to send workers into His harvest.”*