



## The Future of McLean Bible Church *The Story of Scripture – Part 17*

I was having lunch with Lon a couple weeks ago, who faithfully pastored this church for 37 years. Praise God for him! I was asking him all kinds of questions about those 37 years, the ups and downs along the way. Some of you have been here for many of those years—and some even longer than Lon. I think about Betty Wright, with whom I was talking recently. She was one of the five founding families who came together and started MBC over 50 years ago. Bob and Joyce Roundy are here today. Bob's parents, Will and Mary, were one of those founding families. All this to say, whether you've been here for decades or you're brand new to this church, we have a pretty awesome heritage, from five families to campuses and churches of well over 10,000 people spread across our nation's capital.

Today, I want to ask what if our best days as a church are ahead of us, not behind us? I was so struck when we read Deuteronomy a few weeks ago, how after all Moses had seen in his life and leadership, he prayed in Deuteronomy 3:24, "*O Lord God, you have only begun to show your servant your greatness and your mighty hand...*" What if God has only started to show His greatness and His mighty hand through McLean Bible Church? I was so encouraged talking with Lon, as he shared how he wanted to transition because he believed God has so much more for the church in the future—and he was ready to pass the torch on to leaders with vision for that future.

All of this was on my mind as I read Proverbs 16:1-9 this week. Follow along with me as we read it. This is the Word of God.

- <sup>1</sup> *The plans of the heart belong to man,  
but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.*
- <sup>2</sup> *All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes,  
but the LORD weighs the spirit.*
- <sup>3</sup> *Commit your work to the LORD,  
and your plans will be established.*
- <sup>4</sup> *The LORD has made everything for its purpose,  
even the wicked for the day of trouble.*
- <sup>5</sup> *Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the LORD;  
be assured, he will not go unpunished.*
- <sup>6</sup> *By steadfast love and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for,  
and by the fear of the LORD one turns away from evil.*
- <sup>7</sup> *When a man's ways please the LORD,  
he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.*

<sup>8</sup> *Better is a little with righteousness  
than great revenues with injustice.*

<sup>9</sup> *The heart of man plans his way,  
but the LORD establishes his steps.*

There's a simple truth in this section of Proverbs that is significant for every one of our lives.

### **It is wise to make plans that aim for God's glory.**

Proverbs 16:2 says, "*All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the Spirit.*" So motives matter when we're making plans. Verse three says, "*Commit your work to the Lord.*" Commit your work to God for His sake. Just think for a moment about plans you make in your life, your family, your work. Is your driving motivation the glory of God—more than your comfort, more than a bottom line, more than the goals or aims the world might put in front of you? Is your driving motivation the glory of God?

"God, I'm planning and strategizing for Your glory. How can I best spend my time, my money, all the resources You've given me for Your glory? How can I best glorify You in my singleness? How can I best glorify You in the way I love my spouse? God, how can I best glorify You in my parenting? How can I not do what the world around me says I should do in parenting, but how can I best glorify You as a mom or dad with this child? Or, as a child, how can I best glorify You, God, with the way I relate to my parents?"

This week, each day when you wake up in the morning, do you pray, "God, how can I best and most glorify You?" Verse seven says, "*When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.*"

### **It is wise to make plans that align with God's purpose.**

It is wise to make plans that aim for God's glory and that align with God's purpose. Verse four says, "*The Lord has made everything for its purpose...*" and the purposes of God here include fearing Him, turning from evil, living for righteousness and justice, as it says in verse eight. So we make plans that align with God's purposes. And if we're not careful—let's be honest—we can come up with all kinds of plans that seem good to us and are right in our own eyes, as verse two says. But that is an unwise way to live. Living according to what looks best to us is foolishness. Wisdom asks, "What are the purposes of God in the world and how can I align my life and my family with those purposes?" It will change your life when you ask that question.

### **It is wise to make plans that yield to God's sovereignty.**

It's wise to make plans that aim for God's glory, align with God's purposes and ultimately yield to God's sovereignty. That means we are to make plans humbly. Proverbs 16:9 says, "*The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.*" Sometimes life doesn't go as we planned and when that happens, what do we do? We trust the sovereignty of God as we continue to aim for His glory and align with His purposes.

It's wise to plan like this in our personal lives, so don't you think it's wise for us to do this together as a church? In our culture—even in our church culture—if we're not careful, we can be so individualistic or so focused on what is best for each of us that we don't stop to think, "What is best for all of us together as the body of Christ?" This is the way the Bible talks. In 1 Corinthians 12:27 it says, "*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.*" We're part of a bigger picture in such a way that verse 26 says, "*If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.*"

I don't think we always think that if another member of the body is suffering, we all suffer with them. I think we are subtly and dangerously prone to look out for ourselves and even to isolate ourselves. Proverbs 18:1 warns us against that: "*Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment.*" In other words, it's unwise to isolate yourself and seek your own desires.

I would argue that we've actually created a whole church culture in our country that caters to our own desires. You come to a church where you hear the music you like and the sermons that meet your needs. You walk out saying, "I'll give that a five today, or a six, or a one." There are programs that cater to your comforts, but if you ever get dissatisfied, you start complaining. If that doesn't work, you'll find another place that fits your preferences. All this to say, it's wise for us to think together, not just about plans individually as Christians. We're part of a body and we're made for community.

This is why the Bible beckons every follower of Christ to commit our lives to a local church. Whether it's this one or another one, commit yourself to a community where you work together, where you'll plan, not just as individuals, but as a community, so that together you will aim for God's glory, align with God's purposes and trust in God's sovereignty. As we read these verses in Proverbs, it's wise for us to think about the plans God has for our church—for us together. Why are we here? We obviously don't have to come together like this. There are all kinds of other things people in the world are doing today—even other professing Christians.

Heather was sharing the gospel this week with a service technician who came to our house for some electrical work. He said, "I'm a Christian, but I just don't want anything to do with organized religion." As they talked, Heather said, "I totally get some of the reasons why you say that and I actually agree with many of those reasons, but if you're a follower of Jesus, don't you want to gather together to worship God, encourage and serve other people in the body of Christ and work together to spread His

love in the world?” I thought, “Way to go, Babe.” That’s why we’re here. This is what we’re doing together.

### **Our mission: what is God calling us to do?**

What is God calling us to do as a church, and specifically as McLean Bible Church? God is calling us to glorify Him by making disciples and multiplying churches among all nations, beginning in Greater Washington, DC. I hope you see in those words exactly what we just saw in Proverbs. We aim for God’s glory and align with God’s purpose, which is to see disciples made and churches multiplied in the nations.

If we know this is the purpose of God, we know that He will be glorified when disciples—men and women and children—are growing to become more and more like Jesus. Think about it. The more we look like Jesus and the more we love like Jesus, the more God is glorified in us. But it’s not just in us, because again, it’s not just about us. The more others look and love like Jesus, the more God is glorified in the world. So we make disciples and multiply churches. The more gatherings there are of men and women who are glorifying God, the more God is getting glory in the world—starting right here in Washington, DC, where we live and spreading out from here.

By the way, this emphasis on the nations—especially those in people groups who have never heard the gospel—is not new at MBC. I mentioned Bob and Joyce Roundy who are here today. Six years after founding this church, Bob’s parents, Will and Mary Roundy, went out as missionaries from McLean Bible Church. He had two years left in his government job before retirement, but God told him, “Now is the time to go.” They moved to a remote tribe where the gospel had never gone and lived in a mud hut with dirt floors. Will was 50 at the time. So listen 50-year-olds, it’s never too late to go. There are mud huts and dirt floors just waiting for you all around the world. Then decades later, three of the Roundy children and their families are missionaries that are still being supported by McLean Bible Church as they spread the gospel in unreached places.

All this to say, this mission is not new. It’s not just some statement we made up. It’s what God made up. I don’t want to be part of a vision I make up or you make up or anybody else makes up. I want to be part of God’s vision and this is what God calls every follower of Christ to do. We are to be in a church that is glorifying Him by making disciples and multiply churches among the nations, beginning right where we live.

### **But we have a problem.**

This is where I really want to open up my heart to you. Some of you may remember a year or so ago we took a survey on Sunday morning. We passed it out in all of our campuses and asked some questions to see how we were doing in our mission. That survey was really important to me, as I was just starting to get a picture of where things are here. And what I learned proved to be really humbling and really helpful, because it exposed a problem.

I want to summarize that problem with three statistics that I hope will be a wake-up call for us together as a church. Soak this in. One of the questions we asked on the survey was, “How well do you feel like people know you at MBC?” Only 11% of those who took the survey feel like people know them at MBC. I’m going to give one caveat here. The numbers I’m using here are from our Tysons campus, which is our largest campus. So these numbers aren’t exactly the same for every campus, but I would say they’re indicative of the church at large across all our campuses. Eleven percent felt like they were known at their church.

The second statistic that stood out was that 43% of those who took the survey said they are growing spiritually either “a little” or “not at all.” Almost half the people sitting here on a Sunday said they’re either growing a little spiritually or not at all.

Then the third statistics here is that 62% said they hardly ever, if ever, share the gospel. That was defined as “less than two times over the last year.” So the majority of people on a Sunday have shared the gospel either one or zero times over the last year.

When you put all this together, you realize that as a church, we have a problem. When only 11% of the people say they feel known at church and when almost half of us are only growing a little spiritually or not at all, and when almost two-thirds of us hardly ever, if ever, share the gospel that’s a problem.

## **We need a plan.**

These statistics shout to us that we have a problem, so together we need a plan to care for one another like we’re a family. The Bible describes the church as the household of God. If you look in the New Testament, you will see 59 “one another” commands. Love one another. Serve one another. Encourage one another. Honor one another. Bear with one another. Care for one another. We’re not going to go through all 59, but we are to do all these things for one another like a family.

In fact, it should be deeper than family. I think about members of this church who don’t have any physical family who are followers of Jesus. The church is designed to be a family which is pretty simple—you can’t be a family that cares for one another if you don’t know one another. The obvious challenge here is there are thousands of members in this family. There’s no way for any one of us to know everyone else, but certainly every member of this family needs to be known and cared for by others

in the church. And when only 11% say that's the case for them, this shouts, "Mayday! Mayday! We have a problem!"

Obviously statistics don't always tell the whole story. We have a whole lot of other information we don't have time to get into during this sermon. I'll just say this. I love you, church. God woke me up this morning earlier than I'd planned. I thought I'd planned to wake up pretty early, but I woke up even earlier than that. And I woke up praying for you. You were on my mind. I woke up thinking about struggling lives in this church. I woke up thinking about people I know who are battling with sin, people who are walking through trials, struggling marriages that are on the brink of coming to an end. There are wayward kids and their parents whose hearts are breaking over them. There are people walking through this sickness or that trial. We need a plan to care for every single person in this family. It's not just that if we can get to 75%, that would be good.

I have four kids and, Lord willing, one other on the way through adoption. But right now I have four kids. If you were to keep my kids for a night, then I were to come home and you said, "Well, we got three of them taken care of. One is lost and we're really not sure where he is. But 75% are okay." I don't even want to imagine what I would want to do to you at that moment. When you speak those words, are you serious?

God our Father cares for every single person I'm looking at right now and those of you I can't see. He cares for every single one of you. It is not tolerable for 11% to say, "I feel known and cared for" in the church. We need to plan to care for every single person like family.

Along with that, we need to plan to grow in Christlikeness, like we're a gymnasium. That might sound a bit odd to you. You might think, "A gymnasium?" Some of you have no desire to be in a gym right now. But the reason I use this word is because the Bible uses this word. In 1 Timothy 4:7-8 the Bible says, "*Train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way.*" The word there for 'train yourself' in the original language of the New Testament is *gumnazo*, from which we get the word gymnasium. The picture is clear. God calls every one of us to train our hearts and minds to follow Christ. If almost half of us are not growing spiritually, we need to be a better spiritual gymnasium.

There's a craze in our culture today to get fit in various ways. Some of that's really good because it's good to be physically fit. But this body is only going to last for a little while. We need a craze in the church to be spiritually fit, because that's what matters forever. And not just for us here. People's lives are at stake for all of eternity, based on hearing and seeing this gospel alive in us. So we need to plan to make disciples of all nations like we're on a mission.

I have mentioned that many people will be scattering this summer to go on mission trips, which is so awesome. I love it. One of my hopes for these trips is that in working together as a team on a trip, people

will realize this is what the church does. But we don't just do this for a week here or there around the world—we do this right here. As the church, we're a team on a trip in this world every week. We're making disciples together this week in this city where God has placed us, and we go and make disciples in places where God leads us. It's both-and.

It doesn't make sense to be on a mission trip somewhere else, or even right here, but never share the gospel, which is the case for the majority of us. I don't say that to make you feel guilty, but to help you see something needs to change here.

Let's put all this together: If we're not caring for each, growing in Christ and sharing the gospel so that other people can be saved from their sins for all eternity, something is off. These are not obscure things that the church may or may not do. These are the primary things a church must do. This is what we exist for. And if these things are not happening, we desperately need to rethink how we're doing things and we need to make some major changes.

### **Our map: How is God calling us to do it?**

This leads to our map. Let's look at how is God calling us to accomplish this mission? I think about my father-in-law, who was in town not long ago with his wife. They were wanting to go down to the District, but they were pretty nervous about navigating the Metro and the Mall and the museums. So I drew a customized map, hand-written with instructions to help them get where they were going. So what's our map? How do we get to where we're caring for one another like family, growing in godliness like a gymnasium and working together on mission in the world?

### **Dangers we need to avoid.**

As soon as I ask that question, I immediately think about dangers we need to avoid. One danger would be doing everything we can. When I think about that map for my in-laws, what I did not do was put every single detail in the District, because there's no way they could do it all. If we're not careful as a church, we can try to have a menu with all kinds of ministries. If we're not careful in our efforts to do everything we can, we won't do anything well. Just because we can do this or that doesn't mean God is calling us to do this or that.

This means we also need to avoid the danger of continuing to do everything we've ever done. Let's just realize the obvious: we're doing things differently today than the founders of this church did 50 years ago when they started. The basics are obviously the same and what we see in the Bible, but many factors have changed. This means we don't just do what we've always done. And when we make changes

or do things differently, that doesn't mean that what we did in the past was bad. We trust that was right for that time, but we always ask God, "What is the best way to glorify You in the present?"

This leads to another danger: settling for the good and sacrificing the best. Again, there are all kinds of good things we can do. This is true for each of our lives. I can think of all kinds of good things I could do this week that will actually pull me away from quality time with my wife and kids that I need to have. They'll pull me away from the job I know God has called me to do. We're surrounded by good things that we don't need to do. So if we only ask, "What's bad about this or that?" we'll never get anywhere. There's often nothing bad about a program, but that doesn't mean it's the best way for us to glorify God.

Right now there are all kinds of good things we have going on as a church. But meanwhile, we're missing some of the best and most needed things. This leads to the next danger: thinking that more is always better than less. We often think the more activities, programs and events we offer, the greater the impact we'll have. But that can actually lead us to be so scattered amongst all sorts of different things that we lose focus on the few things that are most important. In other words, less is actually sometimes better than more.

We must beware of thinking that fast is always better than slow. This is the way things so often work in our culture. We want a quick fix. We want to get fit—fast. We want to get rich—fast. We want to get this or that fast, so we engineer and advertise all kinds of ways to do it. Then we think, "Why can't we just do that in the church? What's the book I need to read, the study I need to do, the program I need to get involved in? If I do this, all my problems will be solved." But ladies and gentlemen, it doesn't work that way. You can't microwave disciples.

Last year for my birthday Heather got me a smoker for smoking meat. I have learned to put a brisket on there and give it 12-14 hours to smoke and it comes out so juicy. You don't microwave brisket. So when you think about disciple making, don't think microwave; think smoker. We are smoking disciples.

Maybe a better analogy would be parenting. Raising children doesn't happen in a week, or even a month. It takes years of hard work, right? Heather and I are looking at each other. Our oldest is 13 and we'll likely have a toddler on the way through this adoption. It's like we're starting over again. We're not coming to the point where we think teenage years are easier than the toddler years. I see heads nodding all across the room right now of people who have adult children. It just doesn't end—and that's kind of the point. Making disciples is like that. So is multiplying churches. There's no six-week class for this. We want there to be a silver bullet, but it doesn't exist. It's not like there's a two-month fast track on how to be the church. This is why the Bible actually warns against fast tracking at points.



Think about what Paul says in 1 Timothy 5:22: “Don’t be quick to lay hands on elders. Take your time.” Or what’s the saying we know? “Rome was not built in a day.” Apparently it takes time to create great things. If you lay a quick foundation, a sloppy first row of stones, the rest of the building will be compromised forever.

### **The question we need to ask.**

I’m dwelling on this reality for a reason, because it goes totally against the grain of the way we think—and we need to think differently. We need to avoid all these dangers and ask the question together how we can most faithfully and effectively accomplish our mission? What’s our map for how we’re going to faithfully follow God’s Word and effectively carry out this mission in the time and place God has put us—not 50 years ago, not even last year, but today and in the days to come.

I’ve had many people ask, “I see that we’re all about multiplying churches. Does that mean our campuses will become churches at some point?” My answer is that at any point when the leaders across this church and within each campus believe the best way to carry out this mission is for a specific campus to become a church, then we will do that. But that’s not a decision that’s made in isolation. It’s a process where the leaders in the church and the leaders at each campus seek God and discern together, asking, “How can we most faithfully and effectively accomplish our mission?” That’s the question that drives us, no matter where we are or how long we’ve been in the church. We all lay down our preferences, plans and desires, asking God, “How can we together, right now, most faithfully and effectively glorify You by making disciples and multiplying churches among the nations, starting right here?”

That leads us to 1 Kings 18, so turn there with me. And while you’re turning, I want to introduce you to two people I want you to know when it comes to how we’re doing this as a church together. One is our brother Dave Young. Long story short, Dave was very successful in business and quite frankly made a lot of money building and consulting businesses. Along the way he came to faith in Christ as an adult, in large part through this church. He eventually came on staff, serving at the Montgomery County campus. I started to get to know him better over the last year or so.

I’ve asked Dave to come alongside me and use his brilliant gifts and lead us to discover how this mission will play out across every bit of this church. The best thing I can say about this brother is, yes, he is brilliant and extremely gifted, but far more importantly he loves Jesus. Anybody who knows Dave knows he is a man who humbly walks with God and loves this church. He wants this church to be all God desires it to be.

Now Dave was up in New York one day this past week, learning from a church and ministry there about making disciples among unreached peoples in cities like New York and DC. I asked him to shoot a quick video introducing himself and this is what he sent me.

**Dave Young:** Hey, guys. David asked me to send over a video, so I thought I'd say hi on my way over to Penn Station. Some of you may recognize me, because I've been at McLean Bible Church for almost 20 years. I got saved largely through the ministries of McLean Bible Church. It has been so good to be at MBC. Some of my best friends today—whoa, I don't want to get hit by this car—some of my best friends today are people I met at McLean Bible, and some of my favorite memories are from McLean Bible. It's a very special church.

We are seeing some amazing things happening at MBC today. Some pieces are falling into place that make me think MBC's best years of ministry are in front of us, not behind us. That is cool to think about. So I'm here to say that I am really looking forward to being at McLean Bible Church with you guys. I think it's going to be so much fun. Undoubtedly there will be a few bumps along the way, maybe a U-turn or two, but good for sure. I'm really looking forward to it and we'll see you soon. Thanks.

**David:** So that's Dave Young, risking his life to see this mission accomplished at MBC. I said, "Dave, you stopped at the end of the video and just started talking. You didn't have to use crosswalks in New York City while doing the video. I was not asking you to risk your life." Anyway, that's Dave Young.

The second person I want to introduce you to is Scott Logsdon. I met Scott and his wife Cindy years ago. I served alongside them when I was at the International Mission Board and they were missionaries in Central Asia for many years in a country where it's really, really hard to take the gospel.

A good pastor friend of mine summed up Scott and Cindy when he said, "Not that we compare, but Scott and Cindy are the sharpest missionaries I've ever seen overseas." By God's grace, we already have so much going on when it comes to global outreach—staff, volunteer leaders and many others of you working for the spread of the gospel among the nations. Last week, Scott and Cindy committed to come to MBC to lead our work among the nations, starting right here in DC. Scott is actually from this area, along with Cindy—who's from nearby Manassas. I asked them to send a video and they sent a nice, peaceful, non-life-threatening video. So let me introduce you to Scott and Cindy.

**Scott Logsdon:** Hey, McLean church family, my name is Scott Logsdon and this is my wife Cindy. We just want to say how excited we are to be part of this church family. For the past 17 years we've been serving with the International Mission Board with our two daughters, and for 12 of those years we served as missionaries in a Central Asian country. There we saw that what God says in His Word in Psalm 148 is absolutely true. Everywhere we've been, we've seen that the earth is full of the

glory of God. We've watched His amazing work among the nations and as He draws men, women and children to Himself.

Now we're passionate about seeing every member of the church be equipped and mobilized to play a role in making disciples of all the nations—beginning right here in Washington, DC. Our prayer is simply that every member of the McLean church family, from every age group and every group in the church, would play a significant role in God's work among the nations. We can't wait to join you in that work.

**David:** There will be plenty of opportunities for you at the different campuses to get to know these guys in the days and years ahead. Today they're actually running around the building right now, in meetings, at work making disciples. That's the picture: each leader here—Dave, Scott, Cindy, myself, the campus pastors—and every single one of you. That's what I appreciate about what Scott sees with every member of the body working together to glorify God according to His plan. And the beauty of all of this is why I want to close in 1 Kings 18, because God promises to bless people who are committed to His plan with His power.

Elijah and the prophets of Baal—let me summarize the set-up for the sake of time. You've got Elijah and 450 prophets of Baal, who was the false god of the Canaanites whom they believed could bring rain from the sky. Then there were also 400 prophets of Asherah on top of that. So that's one Elijah versus 850 false prophets. The odds are not looking good. Elijah told them, "I want you to see that there's only one true God." They said, "Game on."

So they set up an altar and the prophets of Baal cried out for hours for Baal to bring down fire from heaven, but nothing happened. If you look right in the middle of the chapter at verse 27, you'll see what's called "Old Testament trash talk": "*And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, 'Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself.'*" He just said that! Relieving himself? "*Or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.*" The lesson is clear. When you pray to a god who is not there, do not expect an answer.

After this goes on for hours, Elijah steps up and says, "Let's pour some water around this altar. Let's do it again. Let's do it a third time." So the altar is soaked with water. Then we get to verses 36-40:

*And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back." Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, "The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God."*

There's so much here. The same God Who sent fire from heaven in this story is the same God we have gathered to worship right now. The same God Who showed His power on that day is the same God over McLean Bible Church today. He's the same God! You might think, "Well, what does all Elijah walked through have to do with my life?" This same God wants to show His power in our lives, in our families, in our city and this world today.

So the question is do we want that? I actually want to change it into a question that I want us to ask together: Do we want to see God work in our lives, our families, our city and the world in a way that can only be explained by His power? Do we want this or do we want to settle for status quo in the church, where we just kind of go week by week by week, with monotonous religious motion that misses out, while half of us are growing a little spiritually, most of us not really feeling known, not sharing the gospel?

No! We were created for so much more than this. We want to see God's power in our lives, in our marriages, in our families, in this city and in the world. Deuteronomy 3:24 says, "*O Lord God, you have only begun to show your servant your greatness and your mighty hand.*" Do we want to see God work in a way that can only be explained by His power and can only be attributed to His glory? I love the glory of God. I love this church and I long to see every single one of our lives in our life together experiencing all God has for us. That's why I want to say to us as a church today, let's long together to see God work in a way that can only be explained by His power and only be attributed to His glory.

I was up in New York City this last Tuesday night at Brooklyn Tabernacle to observe their prayer service. I was reminded of story after story after story of lives changed, people who were addicted, totally freed from those addictions. Marriages where changed, families were changed, the church was changed in the middle of Brooklyn, New York. It's no coincidence, though we didn't necessarily plan it this way, but we've planned for this Friday night to have another one of our late-night prayer gatherings. Let's ask God together to work in our lives, in our families, in the city and in this world, through this church, in a way that we sit back and say, "Only God could have done that."

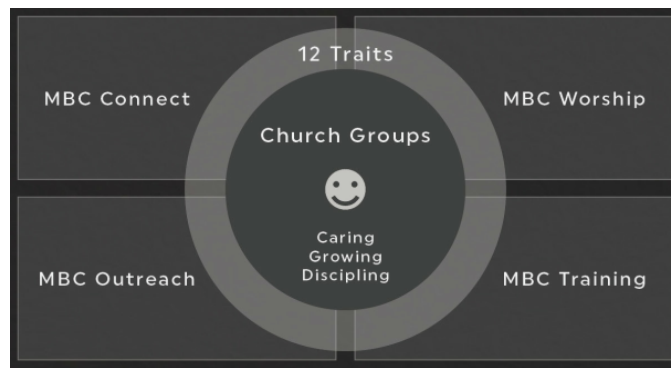
Will you pray with me?

O God, we're serious. We want to see Your glory. We need Your help, Your grace, Your mercy in our lives, our battles with sin, our struggling through trials, our marriages, our parenting. God, we want to see Your glory. We want to see Your power at work among us. We don't want to be content with just status quo. So we are asking You right now, please lead us with Your vision for the days ahead. Please help us aim for Your glory above all else. Help us to align with Your purposes above anything that is right in our eyes.

As we trust in You, we pray that You would work among us in power in ways that cause us to sit back in awe and say, “The Lord, He is God!” Work among us to cause many others in Washington, DC, and many others around the world to sit back and say, “The Lord, He is God!” May that be the fruit of years ahead at McLean Bible Church, we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

So what’s our map here at Tysons? How are we planning to carry out this mission? I want to close with this. I’m going to put a picture up that summarizes the map. Like the map I drew out for my in-laws, here’s the drawing. By the way, this doesn’t come out of isolation. This is not me or just a couple people going into a room and coming out saying, “Here’s what we’re going to do.”

What I’m sharing with you is the fruit of hours, days and months of praying, discussing, debating, listening and learning with members, leaders and elders in the church—all the things we see in Proverbs that are important for making wise decisions. So here’s the map:



Picture the individual member of this church—you, me, any one of us. Picture yourself. Our aim is to work so that every member of the church is cared for like family, so that every single person will be able to say, “I’m known and cared for.” We also want every member to be growing as a disciple. Obviously we all go through seasons, but we want each of us to be growing in Christ and making disciples on mission. This is what we’re created for. We don’t want to get to the end of our lives, look back and see that we have missed the point.

How do we get there? How do we get to where every member is caring, growing and discipling? As we sought an answer to that question, we knew there must be more than church simply being about a Sunday morning gathering in a large auditorium while children and students are in their respective programs. That’s what we usually think of when we think of church, but don’t miss the problem. We can have good gatherings on Sunday with programs going on, with 11% of people feeling known, almost half of us not growing spiritually and most of us not sharing the gospel. We need to change the way we’re thinking about church.

This is why our hope in the days and years ahead is to help every member of this church become part of what I’m going to call a “church group” as shown in the center of this map. Now, I’m not 100%

sure this verbiage is going to stick, but at this point it's the simplest way to describe a group that carries out the functions of a church: church group. It's a group that looks like the church.

Last year at this time we were in the middle of a series called "12 Traits of a Biblical Church." The beauty is we don't have to make up some way to care for one another and grow and make disciples of the nations. God has already told us how to do that. Be in community where there's biblical teaching and prayer, evangelism and discipleship, fellowship—including accountability and discipline—biblical membership and belonging, biblical leadership, biblical worship and ordinances, biblical giving and biblical mission.

When those things are happening, people will be known and cared for, growing and making disciples. That's the way God has designed the church. We want to work to see every person in this church be part of a group where these things are happening, so that when you think of church, you primarily think of this group.

Now the reason I'm not using "small group" or "community group" or "fellowship group" language here is because we have those kinds of groups all across this church and many of them are great. But admittedly, many of these groups have not necessarily been designed to carry out all these functions of a church. What we want to do in the days ahead is help those groups grow in these functions.

So maybe you have a group that focuses on Bible study, but doesn't really do fellowship, accountability and discipline. We want to help that group grow in those areas. You may have a group that does fellowship with one another well, but doesn't really dive into the Word. Maybe you have a group that does fellowship and Bible study well, but not really mission together. And on and on. We want to help current groups grow in these 12 traits, then we want to start new groups that are designed around these 12 traits.

Oftentimes groups are same gender or same generation or even same ethnicity, but as much as possible we want to cultivate groups that represent intergenerational, multi-ethnic communities, which is what we value as a church. Now, in order to start new church groups, we need leaders for those groups—and that doesn't happen overnight. So this fall we're going to start something called "Church Group Intensive" to help train leaders and members for church groups. The commitment bar for that is going to be pretty high. You can find out more information about this in your bulletin today. There's actually a quick 30-minute meeting right after the service in the glass room at the back of the lobby, if you're interested. If you cannot make that meeting, there are more times as you'll see in your bulletin.

But again, don't think microwave here. It's not, "Here's a new program we're starting this week." Think smoker. How are we going to work together over time to strengthen current groups in the 12 Traits, start new groups around the 12 Traits and, Lord willing, grow and multiply those groups over the coming years? What we're planning to do is surround those church groups in four ways:

- MBC Connect – We are going to work hard to connect people in this big body to a group where they can be cared for, grow and make disciples on mission. I hear all the time, “It’s such a large church. I don’t even know how to get connected.” This is where we have a lot of room to grow, but we want to do this well.
- MBC Worship – This happens in our Sunday gatherings to supplement what’s happening in the groups. In other words, the Sunday gathering is not the center here. Instead, it’s the people you’re caring for, growing with, making disciples with on mission. That’s the center. What we do on Sunday supports that in this larger group.
- MBC Training – We want to help each other when it comes to marriage and parenting, counseling through hard issues, how we use money to the glory of God, how we share the gospel in various situations. The primary place where we’ll train like a gym is week in and week out in church groups, but then as we face unique challenges, we’ll have practical biblical training that supplements what’s happening in church groups.
- MBC Outreach – This is where we’ll focus, not just on how we’re making disciples day in and day out, right where we live and work and play—that’s what the church group is for. But we’ll think about what this looks like when we cross barriers in the city and go places around the world where the gospel hasn’t gone in ways that fuel planting and multiplying churches.

So that’s a summary of the map. There’s so much more to unpack in the days to come, including how this coincides with ministry to children and students—how we faithfully pass the gospel on to the next generation. In fact, we’re having some meetings over the coming weeks where you can learn more if you want. We know one thing we need to greatly improve on as a church is our communication in the church. So I want to point you to these meetings.

Some of you who are leaders are already thinking about how you can strengthen your group. That’s great. But first we want to invite you to an information session just for leaders on June 29, then there’s a gathering for any member here at Tysons on July 13. All the specifics are in your bulletin. We just ask that you register if you want to attend those, then we’re going to ask you to watch some videos before you come so we can make the most of that time. There’s a link to that information.

And this leads to a whole other issue, because we’re in the process of redesigning our website around this map. Hopefully our website will be one hundred times more useful in the days to come than it is right now. But for today, I simply want us to have an overall picture of where we’re headed and why. This is what I want, but I trust it’s not just me—it’s us. We want every single member of this body to be known and cared for, experiencing the joy of walking with God, growing in God and making the greatest news known in the world around us.

Remember how I drew the map for my in-laws to go into Washington, DC? It was a good map. I even added a little picture. It was great and I thought it would be pretty helpful. But do you know what

happened? They never went down to the District. They stayed at our house the whole time. Which was fine; we enjoyed the time with them. But they missed out on all that was down to the District.

So you can have a map, but I don't want us to miss out. I'm not saying this map is perfect and it will likely be augmented along the way as we go. But brothers and sisters, let's go. I know change is not easy. Rethinking things is not easy. It takes courage, but it's worth it. Why? Because God has designed us for so much more than what we're experiencing right now.

I mentioned that if you are visiting with us, I hope you're encouraged today. I hope you're encouraged to think about the church you're a part of and how hopefully you can grow in similar ways there. If you're not a part of a church, we would love to have you be a part of this family as we grow in these ways together.

And if you are not a follower of Jesus, there's a sense in which you're the primary reason we've walked through this together today. We want you to know and hear from us being the church God has designed us to be. We want you to know and hear loud and clear, week in and week out, that the God of the universe loves you. Even though we and you have sinned against Him, He has not left us alone in our sin. Even though we deserve separation from Him forever, the God of the universe loves you so much that He has sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross for you, to pay the price for all your sins. Today you can be forgiven of all your sins against God by trusting in what Jesus did on the cross for you.

We want you to hear that from us, not rarely if ever but all the time, because you're not guaranteed tomorrow. You're not guaranteed to make it to Monday. So we want to urge you to put your trust in Jesus today. We want to live with that kind of urgency as a church. We want to say, "We'll make whatever changes are needed for us to experience all that Christ has for us and so that you can hear all that Christ has for you."

Let's pray.

Jesus, You are Lord of every one of our lives and we surrender to You. We pray that You'll help us plan and strategize this week for Your glory in every facet of our lives. Jesus, You are Lord over McLean Bible Church. You're the Chief Shepherd of this church. You're the Leader of this church. It's not me or anybody else—You are the Leader of this church. Jesus, we surrender to You and pray that You would help us plan and strategize for Your glory in the care of Your bride and in the growing of Your bride to be all You created us to be. We pray that You would help us plan for the spread of Your gospel to the ends of the earth. Lead us as a church, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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