

-Chapter 1-
What, Me? On a Mission?
A Call to Be Resolved

***“To Proclaim the Glory and Grace of God
for the Joy of a Passionate Life in Christ”***

This is my life mission. Whether we realize it or not, everybody has a life mission. For some, their mission is to accumulate as many material possessions as possible. For others, it is to live a life free from pain and suffering. Still, some may think they do not have a life mission. They take things as they come along, they roll with the punches, they let life happen. What they don't realize is that they actually have a life mission—to not have a mission. Unfortunately, there are even those in life who have what I call the Eeyore Mission (taken from the character on Winnie the Pooh)—to live the most miserable existence possible.

In the business world, there are literally hundreds (if not thousands) of books published to help readers succeed in business by teaching principles related to having the right mission and purpose in life. In fact, one book I came across claims that “Literally, thousands of people - just like you - have gained clarity, allowing their dreams to come true.” It boasts of helping the reader make easy choices that feel right to them, find their true passions, and promotes steps that will help them have more of what they want in life.

Ironically, in a book designed to prevent readers from putting their “ladder up against the wrong wall,” it falls far short of what God's Word teaches concerning being resolved toward a mission in life. A person reading the kind of book mentioned above will think the greatest purpose in life is to be rich and successful in the world's economy. Yet, they will miss Jesus' exhortation, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke 12:15).

We, as Christians, must be resolved toward living on a mission that is the right mission. Let me spend a moment to clarify what I mean.

What does being “resolved” really mean?

First, what does it mean to be resolved? The good ol' standby Webster's dictionary states, “To reach a firm decision about something, to be determined or deliberate.” We can infer from this that the term resolved means to be purposed with your will toward a certain direction.

Now, that sounds good in a dictionary, but what does this look like in everyday life? Let me give a personal illustration. Ever since I can remember, I have been surrounded by music. It's in my blood. Both sides of my family have a musical background, going back at least two or three generations.

I remember at a young age desiring to play guitar but only being able to strum, thus making a lot of noise, but no music. In the fourth grade, I took a choir class and although I liked singing, watching the teacher play the piano fascinated me. I asked her to teach me some chords and then went home and practiced on an inexpensive organ my parents bought for me. Eventually, I got a guitar for Christmas and asked my dad to show me a few chords to that great Christmas song, *Silent Night*.

After that, my life was consumed with learning how to play the piano and guitar. I loved it so much that I taught myself more chords using a Mel Bay guitar book (Mel Bay is regarded as one of the greatest guitar teachers of all time). No one had to force me to practice; I loved it so much and I was *resolved* to learn how to play as many songs as possible, all at the age of 11.

I was a young man with great resolve to learn these instruments. I also had a great resolve to share with anyone who would listen to what I had been learning. I was determined to be the best that I could be. I did not have to be forced to practice because I knew in which direction I wanted to go. My practicing was deliberate, purposeful, and toward the goal of becoming a better guitar player. The motivation behind it all was the joy I felt when I was learning and playing, a joy that I feel even to this day.

So, we might say that resolution implies commitment, passion, desire to share that passion, and a joy that both motivates and completes the experience. It should not be thought of in the same terms as a “New Year’s Resolution,” which typically has the best of intentions but fizzles out by the first of February. It goes much deeper than that.

On the right mission?

We have no problem being resolved and determined in the ordinary activities of our lives that bring us delight and joy. But the attitude of being resolved, in and of itself, is really of no virtue. In other words, we must be resolved toward the right mission in life—the mission that matters most.

Some would ask what that mission would be. To answer that, we must ask ourselves another pertinent question—what is a mission? Going to another dictionary, the American Heritage Dictionary, we read that a mission is “An inward call to pursue an activity or perform a service.”

Here we see some words that help us connect the term *mission* with *resolve*. Words like *call* and *pursue* should immediately catch our attention. Biblically, these are strong words. As we will study in Chapter 10, the Apostle Paul knew that his calling to be a Christian was the single greatest passion in his life. He wrote to the Philippians, “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14). Paul received that inward calling, not from himself, but from God. It is not the case that Paul woke up one day realizing that he wanted to live for God. Rather, the calling of God upon Paul’s life was a direct result of God’s gracious act to change Paul and give him a mission worth living for.

When writing to Timothy, his son in the faith, Paul urges him to “Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness” (1 Timothy 6:11). The Greek word for *pursue* carries with it the idea of a person running a race to the goal swiftly. It is a term that depicts not a casual following but a purposeful pursuit. Toward what end? God Himself, for the things Paul pushes Timothy toward all center upon God.

This is the point I want to emphatically state in this book. There are plenty of missions out there to be lived. There are also many callings a person may pursue. But if we are Christians, there should only be one mission worth living—the one that centers upon and has as its end in God Himself.

Not only is the end important, but the means to that end are equally as important. You may ask about feeding orphans, or ministering to disaster victims, or teaching adult Bible studies. Aren’t these missions worth devoting our time and energy to? Yes, they are, but again, not as an end to themselves. As

we will see, only that which is done for the glory of God is of any worth, because God alone is most worthy.

I am confident that God is pleased with those who understand the motive behind why they do what they do. The means, as well as the end, are an expression of worship and love through the grace that God so freely gives us to be resolved toward the right mission in life. So in developing our life mission, we must be careful to discern not only the end, but the right God-glorifying means to that end.

Mission Statement 101

One of the goals of this book is to encourage you to learn what is the mission worth being resolved toward and then to be able to write it out in a mission statement. Although it will most likely be different than the one I propose in this book, it should have these five essential components:

1) It must, at its very core, be God-Centered.

This may seem like a given to most Christians, but I fear that there is no small amount of man-centeredness that has crept into the minds of many believers and churches today. It is as imperative as ever to understand what the Bible means by the term “God-centered.”

What does it mean to be God-centered? Evangelical Christians believe in the triune God, claim the deity of Christ as truth, and assert that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone. And they do not sit around and sing songs about how great humanity is or how we should be on the same plane as God in terms of worth and power. But whether we realize it or not, the subtleties of man-centeredness can creep unexpectedly into our thinking and living. What do I mean?

There is a danger in relating to God that has a starting point with humans rather than with God. For example, this man-centered thinking can infiltrate well-intending churches who want to see legitimate church growth. Yet, instead of relying upon the power of the gospel and the Holy Spirit to make Jesus’ promise good—that He would build His church—churches and leaders can rely upon modern marketing schemes and ideas to bring people into the church without making them actually the Church.

Another example is the proclamation of the gospel in the last 50 or so years. I have experienced in my lifetime many methods (and even manipulations) to get sinners to “accept” Christ that are foreign to biblical apostolic preaching and the call of the gospel. Often, man-centered psychological means are employed, and the number one draw becomes not the reconciliation of unrighteous sinners to a holy God, but saying a prayer to get into heaven without any mention of sin, repentance, or why we must believe in Jesus to be saved.

In contrast, to be God-centered means that the very starting point, ending point, and every point in between must be anchored in the character of God and His truth, and must exalt the unchanging character of God and not us. I think we can better understand what it means to be God-centered by looking at how God Himself is God-centered. This is communicated clearly at Mount Sinai when God gave His covenant people the Ten Commandments. Notice the God-centeredness of this passage in Exodus 20:1-3:

And God spoke all these words, saying, I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.

God makes it very clear that He alone is God and that Israel gained her identity not in her own strength, power, or self-contrived desire to worship, but in God alone. Israel's existence and deliverance came from a gracious act of redemption that God promised to Abraham some 400 years prior. And God demanded exclusive recognition of Himself in the hearts of Israel as the one and only true God (see Deuteronomy 6:4ff).

God alone set up the stipulations of the covenant with His people. Sinai was not a collective bargaining agreement. It was not based upon popular vote or political polls. The very formation of God's people rested on the idea that God alone was sovereign, gracious, and holy, and His people were to come to Him on His terms alone.

The same must be true for the mission that we embark upon as God's people. It must be on His terms, not ours. Jesus made this very clear in John 4:24 when He said, "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." God declares that the only acceptable means of worship must be God-centered!

As fallen humans, even as those having been redeemed by grace, we often want to have some part in the final glory of what God does in and through us. Many times we feel we do acts of service and worship with the best intentions, but even the greatest intentions can rob God of His glory and turn an act from a God-centered action to a man-centered travesty.

If our mission is to be pleasing to God (a thus an act of worship), it must be based on the very character and nature of God as revealed in the Bible. It cannot be determined by popular culture or church tradition. It must be centered upon God receiving every ounce of glory and man receiving none. It must rest on the character, precepts, commandments, love, grace, joy and hope of God alone.

2) It must be based on the person and work of Christ.

The message of the Bible centers on the Messiah, the Christ, the God-man, Jesus of Nazareth, His great redemptive work on the cross and His glorious resurrection from the dead. From Creation to the New Heavens and Earth, all is centered upon the worth and work of the One who was "foreknown before the foundation of the world" as the "Lamb who was slain" (1 Peter 1:20, Revelation 5:12).

As I hope to convince you, any idea about being resolved toward a mission apart from the power of Christ in us is utterly worthless and down right impossible. "Apart from me you can do nothing," were the words of the Master, and He really meant them (see John 15:5).

I find myself at times moderately scoffing at this notion, if not aloud, at least in my heart and mind. We all can tend to leave the "big stuff" for the Savior and prefer to take care of the little things on our own. What a slap in the face of the One who said, "Apart from me you can do nothing"! What we often mean is, "Apart from Jesus, I can do a lot of simple, ordinary things on my own, and do them pretty well." This type of thinking depreciates greatly the work of Christ on the cross and His continuing power of sanctification through the Holy Spirit.

Ponder for a moment Romans 8:28-30:

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed

to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

We like the part that speaks of God working all things for the good of those who love Him. This is our source of comfort in times of suffering and confusion (as it should be). But can easily become our scapegoat for the messes we produce in our lives. We mess up and then say, “Well, I guess that was part of God’s plan.” But we cheapen this promise if we rip it out of its context and forsake the depth of meaning Paul was communicating.

It is true, that for those who love God, He works all things for good. But what is that good? I take it to mean nothing less than God Himself. What may happen in my life may not seem “good” according to my standards or expectations, but I know that it is good because God is good and because what God is doing in my life is good. The word is good because in it God will receive the ultimate glory. The good work God is doing began before the foundation of the world when He chose to call me and every other believer to Himself and complete the process of sanctification in my life for the ultimate good of glorifying Him.

The process which God will accomplish by His grace relates to our point that our mission must be based on the person and work of Christ. We notice in verse 29 that, “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined *to be conformed to the image of his Son*, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” One purpose of God’s purposes in our salvation, according to these verses, is to conform us to the image of Christ. Therefore, the mission we are resolved toward must seek to display Christ, love Christ, desire Christ—make Christ the center of all we are, think, feel and do. Any mission outside of this fact is not a mission worth living, and is downright dangerous.

Let me give you an example of this, one that caused one of the greatest atrocities in human history. Adolf Hitler and his regime knew that the diabolical plan to rule the world would have to involve conformity to the Nazi ideology. How would they conform the people to the image of Nazism? By indoctrinating their youth to live on a mission toward superiority, which would involve the destruction of those deemed inferior. They had a clear image of what they wanted attain and used every ounce of energy to ensure that the German people, especially the youth, attained to their image. This had the end goal to indoctrinate them in the Nazi mission. Now, the Nazi mission was totally Satanic and destructive, yet it was tragically accomplished with some “success,” which meant the deaths of over 6 million Jews and millions of others. The methods of indoctrination worked and many in Germany were committed to the Nazi mission, because they solidified what image they were all to conform to.

We as Christians have a mission that is divine and good. We have the truth revealed to us through Christ and His Word. Yet, we are often confused when it comes to what we are actually living for and what purpose God is leading us toward. The “good” that many desire is a nice house, healthy family, good paying job, and comfortable recreational life. Again, these things in and of themselves may not be bad or evil. But if the ultimate good in our lives is not based upon the person and work of Christ, then we are living for the wrong purpose, and these things are simply vain idols.

So much could be said about the person and work of Christ that it would ultimately end up to be a book in itself (and there are plenty of good ones on the market today). Suffice it to say that our mission must not only be based upon the person of Christ, but what Christ has accomplished once-for-all in our salvation. The application of Christ’s work in our lives to be resolved toward the right mission is both necessary and vital.

3) It must be radically Biblical.

In my mind there is a difference between being Biblical and Bible-based. What is the difference, you ask? In simplest terms, Bible-based is just that—based on Biblical principles, but lacking a complete and thorough Biblical perspective. In other words, it lacks the main thrust and movement that the Bible focuses upon, namely, God's work toward redemption and restoration of the heavens and earth.

This is to say that the Bible exists as a complete whole in thought and doctrine through and through. Some have sought to divide the Bible into what would seem to be distinct parts of God's dealings with man. But often this comes at the expense of seeing the comprehensive message, flow, and structure of the Bible.

Therefore, to be Biblical, our mission must be consistent with God's mission throughout the pages of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. This is based on the reality that any mission we may be engaged in is a part of God's mission, not the other way around. So what is that mission?

Simply stated, it is the self-exaltation and glorification of His character through the gracious redemption of His people through faith in Christ. This is seen in both Genesis and Revelation specifically. In Genesis, it takes the form of the earliest proclamation of the gospel by God—the *protoevangelium*. In Genesis 3:15, God tells the serpent:

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

God made it clear that He would be the One who would put enmity (or divisional war) between Satan and the woman, and their respective offspring (or more literally, seed). God then honed in on one particular Offspring or Seed. It would be this One, born of a woman, who would bruise Satan's head, giving to him a fatal blow, while Satan would first bruise Him on the heel.

We, of course, know this prophecy is ultimately fulfilled in Christ and His death on the cross. This prophecy is given after Adam and Eve had, in most audacious pride, rebelled against the very glory and word of God, and chose to succumb to the lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life (see 1 John 2:15-17).

What resulted was a promise of redeeming grace. The same redeeming grace that allows us to be resolved toward a mission that is God-centered, Christ-dependent, and Biblically-minded. It is the redeeming grace that seeps from every page of Holy Scripture.

We find in Revelation 7:9-11:

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

We are gripped with the fact that from beginning to end God's plan is to redeem for Himself a people from every tribe, tongue, and nation who will be around His throne forever and ever, giving glory to Him in purity, proclaiming the great salvation of the God who sits on the throne, and the Lamb, Jesus Christ. This great salvation is the overarching theme of the Bible—the story of God's display of His wondrous glory through the redemption of His people by grace through faith in Christ, and with a purpose of bringing all things to a consummation in the New Heavens and Earth.

How God expresses this plan of salvation is seen primarily through the covenants of Scripture. A study of the covenants reveals to us that first, God is the only One who sets the terms and conditions of each covenantal relationship with humanity. Second, He alone is able to fulfill these terms and conditions by His grace. Third, man is called by God to respond to His covenants in faith—not a faith that adds anything to the conditions, but a faith that is a response to God's gracious provision which is ultimately fulfilled in His Son and is evidenced by devotion and obedience to His Word.

What does this have to do with our life mission? How does this help us live a purposeful and meaningful existence? The answer is simple. Neither you nor I would be able to find what mission we are to live for if it were not for God's sweeping revelation of His mission and purpose in the world—again, the story of God's display of His wondrous glory through the redemption of His people by grace through faith in Christ.

When considering what my mission statement of life was to be, I had to consider if I was to be Biblical or just Bible-based. I chose to align my mission with God's overarching mission in history. It is one thing to try to prove a case for a mission or purpose in life by using various Scriptures from various translations to substantiate one's point. It is another to have a deep knowledge of the Biblical structure of God's purpose and mission. It might be tempting to bend God's mission to conformity with our mission rather than conforming our mission to His. A Biblical mission will always do the latter.

4) It cannot be haphazard or subject to chance, but must be willful and deliberate.

Nothing in life that is done well is done haphazardly. Well, I take that back. There are those few and rare individuals that have come up with something unique by accident. But they are the exception and not the rule.

Take, for example, Post-It notes. These little sticky pieces of paper have found a common place in offices around the globe. Yet, most people do not realize that they were discovered by accident.

As part of an experiment to improve adhesives on various tapes, an inventor came across a substance that had unique properties, different than other adhesives. Although it was not as strong as that found on, for example, Scotch tape, he did not discard the idea. Its true application came from another scientist, who kept having his markers fall out of his church hymnal (I hate when that happens). Using the adhesive, they discovered it worked perfectly to keep slip a paper from falling off boards or out of books while still being easy enough to remove without damaging what it was adhered to. And since 1980, this happy little "accident" is one of the most popular office items sold.

Or what about Silly Putty? You know, that great toy that can be stretched and pulled almost without tearing, and can even copy comics out of the newspaper! This great invention came about when a scientist accidentally placed some silicone oil with some boric acid (sounds dangerous to me). Actually, it was supposed to be a rubber substitute during WWII. What was actually born is a cool substance not only to kids, but to astronauts, who would use it as an adhesive on space missions.

Now although these inventions would seem to be the opposite of deliberate, they were discovered by men who were dedicated to their respective fields in science. So we could say that although serendipitous in form, they were the result of men who had direction and purpose in their pursuit of knowledge. Even “accidental” discoveries are not the result of blind chance, but purposeful design.

My point is that we as believers with a biblical mission in life cannot expect to experience any spiritual growth by accident. Nor can we expect to fulfill the mission of God as determined in Scripture without willful and purposeful resolve. Why else would we have so many commands in the Bible that need to be obeyed and that keep our spiritual lives in check (such as strive for holiness—Hebrews 12:14)?

There must be determination coupled with grace. Apart from God’s divine grace, none of us could ever finish the race of the Christian life, let alone be a participant in it. Yet, our Heavenly Father promises help and grace to those in need through His Son. This is a grace we cannot be resolved without.

Therefore, we must respond to grace with the determination to follow the Lord and His ways without wavering or giving up. We must reflect the heart of Jesus, who proclaimed, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me” (John 6:38). What was the will of His Father, but to go to the cross as a ransom for many, that through the cross, the righteousness of God would be manifested to the world (Romans 3:21-22)? Jesus was determined to do this, as Luke reports in 9:51, “When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.”

That is not haphazard wandering, a mere taking life day by day and seeing what might happen. Rather, it is a purposeful obedience to the will of the Father, sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit, and guided and directed by prayer (see Mark 1:35).

We will see in more detail as we get to Chapter 10 what determination in a mission and a passion for God really looks like in our everyday lives.

5) It must be set into motion every day of our lives.

This leads to our last point, namely, a mission must be something that goes beyond the ideal or theoretical and must be lived out each and every moment of our existence on earth as believers. There are some Christians who are big on theory and theology, but struggle to make it part of their daily walk with Christ. Or, some may have piles of devotional books, but little devotion to the obedience God desires in what might be called the “small stuff” of life.

One might be drawn to engage in a grand mission for God. “Send me overseas,” or “Let me be a well-recognized spiritual figure” can become a goal for success. But the grander mission is seen in how we handle the supposed minutia of our lives.

Jesus said that one who is faithful in little is faithful in much (Luke 16:10). In being resolved toward a mission in life, we have to be faithful in what God sovereignly lays at our feet every day. This day by day abiding relationship is what the mission is all about. In the Psalms we read statements like, “By day the LORD commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life, “ and “O LORD, God of my salvation; I cry out day and night before you” (Ps 42:8 and Ps 88:1).

Notice the recognition of day and night being a time of seeking and living for God. For those who abide in Christ, the time for calling out to God is continual. It is easy to get a fire alarm mentality in our walk with

God; that when things get rough, out of our control, or reach critical mass, we pull the alarm. But when things are going well, it's easy to feel no need to "bother" God concerning things that are supposedly in our control; the things that are easy.

Yet, nothing is ultimately in our control, for God is the only One who has perfect control of everything. If something goes well in my life, it is not because of me, but because of God's merciful grace in that moment. Therefore, my life mission must also be lived in every moment until the Lord calls me home to be with Him.

Are you convinced?

I hope you are convinced at this point that there is indeed a mission that we should be resolved toward and that we should desire to live out every day of our lives. It is not a mission that we are left to find and fulfill, but one that God Himself calls us to and empowers us to accomplish. While it may take you to a faraway place like Abraham, most likely it will be lived before those around you first.

This mission must be God-centered, Christ-empowered, and Biblically motivated. It will cost you nothing short of your life. But what an exchange! For Christ promises those who lose their lives for His sake will find life in Him (Matthew 10:39).

The very heart of the mission is wrapped up in God. He sets us on the mission. It is His grace that sustains us on the mission. He determines the outcome of the mission. It is He who will receive all of the glory for the mission.

I close this chapter with a pertinent illustration of what I have tried to communicate in this chapter. There was a little boy who loved trees. Growing up on a small farm in a large forest, he would often go to admire the large, majestic pines and oaks that surrounded his family property after his chores were completed.

As he was out walking one day, he noticed a small and fragile pine sapling struggling for light in the midst of the large trees around it. In fact, the struggle was so evident because the sapling was growing at an angle toward a small beam of light penetrating through the towering adult trees.

The boy decided that the best thing for this fragile sapling was to uproot it and take it to the safety of his garden. He was able to straighten the little tree by using some poles he made from the branches of another strong tree. Now straightened, this tiny tree could experience the full warmth of the sunshine that it had always needed and desired.

The little boy grew attached to his tree. He would water it daily. But unbeknownst to him, while out doing his other chores, his father would come and check on the tree. At times, he would add a little fertilizer for added nutrients and spray it with pesticide when infested by insects. He did this because he saw the value of teaching his son the importance of caring for something and being disciplined to take care of this little tree.

The tree continued to grow, that is, until one day as the boy went out to check his tree, he noticed that it had been broken at the base. As he investigated what had happened, he noticed bear tracks and fur marks around the tree. It seemed that a bear had come by and broke his precious tree.

The little boy was devastated. His heart broke over this little tree that he loved so much. He knew of only one thing to do—take it to his father, whom he knew could fix anything. As he carried the broken pine into his father’s workshop, he explained everything as his father listened with great intent. Making no guarantees, the father told the boy that he would try to fix the broken tree. He then excused his son to go and finish the rest of his chores.

The boy could hardly keep his mind on his chores. What would normally seem to take minutes seemed like hours as he anticipated the good news his father might have for him. Finally, the father called his son to stand by his side.

“Did you fix it, dad?” the boy inquired. “Were you able to save my tree?”

The father approached his son with solemn expression. He was not able to fix the tree. It was too late. The damage done by the bear was too great for the sapling to have any chance for surviving.

Tears welled up in the child’s eyes. With a strong and callused hand, the father embraced his son. Then a twinkle came upon the father’s eyes as he whispered to his son, “Your tree is not gone.”

The boy was puzzled. What did his father mean? Then the father gently led the boy to his workbench. He pointed and told his son, “Here is your tree.”

As the boy looked carefully, he saw something carved out of wood. It was a train—a wonderfully crafted miniature engine, box car, and caboose. That father had taken a lifeless, broken tree, and made it into something wonderful.

That boy cherished that train, and eventually passed it on to his son as a reminder of what his father had done.

God in His grace has set His love upon us and brought us into a relationship with Him. We face many trials in life, often times feeling frail and broken, yet we never escape the loving care of our Heavenly Father. He is the One who transforms our lives into His perfect design. He is the One who nourishes us daily. He is the One who takes lifeless sinners and infuses into them the life of His Son, and sets them to be resolved toward a mission for His glory.

Like that little sapling, it is the work of the Father through the Son to create something wonderful, as a display of His masterful love and grace. Our lives are like the boy’s sapling, growing in the Lord and displaying Him to the world around us. We, like that boy, are called to appropriate God’s grace so we might continue to grow into the image of Christ. It is in the context of the church that we find strength and encouragement from our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Are you on that mission? I trust you will be committed to finding out more about this mission in the pages to come. If you are not on the mission, and have not yet received the wonderful gift of love to us in Christ personally, then I want you now to skip ahead to page X to know what it means to have a relationship with God through the good news of the gospel.

For those who know Christ, be ready to be challenged to be resolved toward a God-centered, Christ-dependent, Biblically-driven, deliberate and daily mission in life.