

What People Say About *Going Around The Corner*

Our church has been challenged and equipped through the vision of *Around The Corner Ministries*. The concept is so simple we almost overlook it. God wants us to reach out to our neighbors, build relationships with them, then use those relationships as a bridge to share the Gospel. I have had Todd share with the entire church in our three Sunday morning services. He has spoken and encouraged the men's group in a special setting. ATCM also has led six weeks of training for our people where they were given practical ideas and equipped to share Jesus with their neighbors. Cold turkey visitation is not well received in our day. The best way to reach people is through relationships. *Going Around The Corner* is a God-given and effective way to train God's people in building those Gospel relationships with their neighbors.

Pastor Steve Scoggins, First Baptist Church, Hendersonville, NC and President of the NC Baptist Convention

When we heard that our church was offering a class on how to witness to your neighbors, we signed up immediately. We were extremely frustrated because we felt like failures in our attempts to reach our neighborhood with the Gospel. For over eighteen years we were making no difference. The very first class opened our eyes of understanding. God is responsible to change hearts, not us. We are responsible to meet our neighbors needs as God reveals them. As we prayed, God showed us what to do. We are to start with neighbors of peace and build friendships and find other believers in the neighborhood to join us in praying for our lost neighbors. We had none and prayed for God to send some. Two other believers just moved onto our street. We are practicing how to share our story and the Gospel and are praying for opportunities to do so with lost neighbors. Our self-guilt is gone, and we are confident God will open doors and hearts. *Going Around The Corner* is an easy-to-read and follow strategy to reach your neighborhood for Christ, and the class covers all the details. We highly recommend both.

Bill & Gail Yancey, Workshop Participants

I started this book simultaneously with starting a new business, what I believe was God taking me "around the corner" as His witness in the business world. The study launched me into a new realm of understanding about what it means to take Christ to the world in which I live every day. And truthfully, it's a book I go back to time and time again to be reminded to "stay the course" and to keep doing what God has purposefully given me to do. It's a must read for anyone who wonders if God can use them right where they are, in everyday life.

Connie Caldwell, Business Owner

It's about time the church woke up to the huge responsibility living next door to us. *Going Around The Corner* is a wake-up call to us all. We have something/Someone that the world desperately needs, and this book calls us to share Him, right where we are. We used the book as a study guide for six sessions of our Life Group. And, living locally to Todd and Sheila, we had the added blessing of their leading our group through all our meetings. For groups or individuals, if *Going Around The Corner* doesn't get you out there meeting your neighbors, you must be glued to your seat.

Mark Case, Workshop Participant

We invited *Around The Corner Ministries* to share this outreach approach in our church. The information was Biblically-based, and easy to understand. The material focuses on one's own neighborhood. Biblically speaking, our community is our field! The rest is simple. We get out in our neighborhood, pray for our neighbors, get to know them in a casual, non-confrontational way, develop relationships with them, often helping them with any need, and we do all this to earn the right to show and share the Gospel. Working with a "person of peace" we create a community of believers in our own back yard and grow together. This model of evangelism is most relevant for the culture we live in today; it equips us to do what should be "natural" to the Christian. Our church is excited about what we have learned. Every Christian has a story to tell and this book and class energized us to do just that. If you are looking to add a spark of excitement and motivate your people to "get out and share the Gospel" then *Going Around The Corner* is for you!

Pastor Clark Henderson, Newbridge Baptist Church, Asheville, NC

Going Around The Corner is a wonderful Bible study. The study takes you through God's initial calling on your life, the awareness and obligation we have to evangelize those around us right where we live, how to start conversations and bring the lost to the Lord and ends with the responsibility we have to disciple new believers. So many studies today bring you the author's ideas with Scripture to back them up. Not this study. You will actually open your Bible and be led systematically to passages reading what God has to teach you through His Word. There is no doubt this study can bring revival to your own heart, your church, and your community.

Pastor Richard Jelly, Brevard Wesleyan Church, Brevard, NC

Going Around the Corner offers a fresh call to the church to return to doing in our own neighborhoods what we send missionaries around the world to do - take the gospel to the lost. The book is biblical and based on the authors' own personal experiences in their own neighborhood. It is not only a must read but also an example to follow!

Missions Pastor Jim Russell, Brushy Creek Baptist Church, Taylors, SC

This study has helped me renew my desire to engage with those who live around me. The study's design is easy to read and understand. Each day has a specific focus with relating scripture and questions. I have been challenged to look at scripture in ways that I hadn't before. The questions in the study helped me go below the surface level of just reading God's word and search for deeper meaning. I love that each day ended with a prayer focus that helped me talk to God about what I had just learned. Do you believe that God had a hand in placing you where you currently live? If so, this study will help you discover His purposes for placing you there. I definitely recommend this study for individuals or small groups that want to find practical ways to impact their community.

Tina Hawk, Workshop Participant

Todd and Sheila Alewine are a godly couple who have devoted their lives to the mission of the church and the Great commission. Their ministry and life of service to the work of God makes their book, *Going Around the Corner*, a vital source for anyone interested in reaching their neighborhood with the Gospel of Christ. The book helps Christians learn to see their neighborhood and work environment as a mission field and learn to pray for the neighborhood and for partners in reaching the community. *Going Around the Corner* is a practical guide and source that simplifies the task of discipleship and makes discipleship in the power and strength of God understandable and doable in the community.

Scott Thompson, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Fruitland Bible College, Fruitland, NC

Going Around The Corner

Taking the Gospel to Every Neighborhood in America

**Todd & Sheila Alewine
Around The Corner Ministries**

aroundthecornerministries.org

Around The Corner Ministries exists to take the gospel to every neighborhood in America. Our mission is to equip followers of Jesus to engage their neighborhoods and communities with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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A WORD FROM THE AUTHOR

Over the course of our marriage, we have lived in two states, four cities, and seven different neighborhoods. Studies show that 11% of Americans move from one residence to another in any given year, and that people make an average of eleven moves during their lifetime. We would say that's accurate; not counting the years at college, we've moved nine times, and don't expect to move again more than once or twice until we relocate to our eternal home.

Americans move around for a variety of reasons, including jobs, marriage, divorce, or simply a desire for a change in lifestyle. But what if I told you that God is sovereignly active in every one of those moves?

In Acts 17:26, Paul tells us that God had a specific plan in mind when you were born.

And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation.

God is intimately involved in **when** and **where** you live. You are not living where you are by accident. God has work for you to do.

Over the next six weeks, you will discover the reason God has placed you in community with others, whether it be in your neighborhood, your workplace, or the gym where you work out. He is already at work in the hearts of others, and He desires to use you to introduce your friends, neighbors and co-workers to Jesus Christ.

Our prayer is that at the end of this Bible study you will see from scripture how God has called each one of us to **go around the corner** and share the good news about Jesus. Through a simple strategy of reaching out through prayer, good works, and sharing your story, God can use you to advance His kingdom and bring people into the family of God.

God bless your journey!

Todd and Sheila Alewine

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

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

Matthew 28:18-20

We believe that Jesus' command to **make disciples** is made up of two parts: reaching and teaching. We see this in the two words **baptize** and **teach**. A baptized disciple is one who has believed; the gospel has reached their ears and penetrated their hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the first step. The second step is that the disciple must be taught how to follow Jesus. He must learn all that Jesus commanded and how to walk daily in his new life.

This study provides a pattern for **reaching** (Part One) and **teaching** (Part Two).

Part One includes Chapters 1-4. We learn how to explore where God has put us, how to engage others through prayer and good works, and how to evangelize: how to tell our own story of conversion and share the gospel.

Part Two includes Chapter 5-6. We learn what a new believer must know to be established in his walk in Christ, and the purpose of the local church in equipping him to serve and become a mature believer who will go on to be a disciple-maker himself. This section presents a basis of material to personally disciple a new believer, as well as affirms the mature believer in his faith.

An effective way to lead a group through this study is to plan for six weeks to cover Part One, giving time for an introductory lesson, a chapter each week, and a final week for sharing stories, answering questions, and commissioning your group to go out into their neighborhoods and workplaces. After your group has had time to personally implement what they have learned, and experienced opportunities to intentionally share their faith, you could meet for a second session of three-to-four weeks, during which you would cover Part Two, with the intention of equipping them to disciple a new believer. Thus, you will have equipped the saints to be true disciple-makers, both reaching and teaching, as Jesus commanded us in Matthew 28.

PART ONE: REACHING

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

Matthew 28:18-20

Chapter One

Exploring Your Neighborhood: His Harvest

Day 1 – His Harvest

For the next few weeks, we are going on a journey to learn how we can reach our neighbors, co-workers and friends with the gospel. Our goal is to discover God's heart for others, and to make ourselves available for Him to use to share the good news of Jesus right in our own backyard.

If you say the word "missions" most likely an image of a far-off land comes to mind, somewhere remote that takes at least a plane ride to get there. You probably think of staying in less-than-desirable accommodations, eating strange food, and being unable to understand the spoken language. And yes, those descriptions are accurate for a lot of mission trips.

We also think of being called a "missionary" as something unique – reserved for those people who are truly spiritual and special. It's not for the ordinary person, like you and me. Or is it?

The word "mission" simply means *an important goal or purpose that is accompanied by strong conviction; a calling or vocation; it is a sending or being sent for some duty or purpose.* A missionary is simply someone who is living "on mission."

Are we all called to live "on mission?" Let's explore some scripture this week and see what the Bible says.

Matthew 9:35-38 – Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

What do we learn about Jesus from this passage?

Jesus was _____ through all the cities and villages (verse 35).

What was His mission as He traveled through the cities and villages?

What did Jesus see?

What did Jesus feel? Why?

In verses 37-38, Jesus tells His disciples that they should pray for something.

What is it?

Why did Jesus ask His disciples to pray for laborers for the harvest?

What is the harvest that Jesus refers to?

Luke 10:1-2 – Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. And He was saying to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

The context of Luke 10 gives us even greater insight into the harvest.

Where was the harvest going to be, according to Jesus?

What was special about these places?

In John 4 we find a story that gives us even more insight into the harvest. Jesus is traveling through Samaria. Tired and thirsty, He rests at the well outside the city while the disciples go in to the city to get food to bring back. Jesus has a divine appointment with this lady, and during their conversation, He reveals Himself as the Messiah. She believes Him, and rushes back to tell her friends. In the meantime, the disciples return with food, but Jesus is no longer hungry. He tells them, *I have food to eat that you do not know about.*

Now read John 4:34-35.

What food is Jesus talking about?

In verse 35, where does Jesus specifically tell the disciples to find the harvest?

Jesus looked with compassion on people. He saw their hearts and their need. He was not a “far away” God, but the One who was coming to them – right into their own city and village, and He sent His disciples ahead of Him to prepare the way.

In the same way, Jesus is preparing us to be laborers in the harvest He desires – the souls of men and women who are like sheep without a shepherd. He desires their salvation, because He has looked upon them with compassion.

As you close today’s study, ask God to show you the harvest that is right around you, and to give you a compassionate heart.

Day 2 – God’s Sovereignty and Our Mission

It is not enough to recognize that there is a harvest of souls. We must also recognize our calling as laborers and understand that God has given us a personal mission to reach others with the gospel. To truly believe in a **personal mission**, we must have an appreciation for the sovereignty of God.

Read 1 Chronicles 29.

What is the context of this passage? What is happening in the chapter?

According to verse 1, why was the temple being built?

What was the attitude of David and the people, as they gave of their treasures? (v. 2-3, 9)

According to 1 Chronicles 29:10-16, what did they realize about God, that caused this attitude?

David and the people of Israel understood the sovereignty of God over all they possessed. They realized that everything they had given to build the temple was simply giving back to God what He had provided in the first place.

To understand God as **sovereign** is to realize that He has all power, all authority, and all dominion over all things.

1 Chronicles 29:11-12 – Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O LORD, and You exalt Yourself over all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone.

List what you learn about the sovereignty of God from verses 11-12:

God is not only sovereign over our possessions and our blessings, He is also sovereign over where we live and work.

Read the following verses and write down what you learn about the sovereignty of God. **How does this personally apply to you?**

Acts 17:24-28 – The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek

God, if perhaps they might grope for him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'

Do you believe God has placed you in your home for a mission?

How do you know?

As you close today's study in prayer, ask God to give you a heart of praise and joyful gratitude for the blessing of your home, your neighborhood and your workplace. Thank Him for His sovereign plan in determining where you live, so that you can be a part of the harvest that is right around you.

Day 3 – Dodging Distractions

What keeps you from accomplishing what you set out to do? Often, we become excited about a particular opportunity or God-given assignment, only to fall to the wayside before we reach our goal. **We get distracted.**

Let's look at two distractions and how to avoid them, so we can remain faithful to the mission God has given us to reach the harvest in our own neighborhood.

Distraction #1: Wrong Perspective

Read Matthew 16:21-23. According to verse 21, what had Jesus turned His attention toward? What was His purpose?

What was Peter's response to the plan for Jesus' future?

Jesus gives a very strong response to Peter in verse 23. What do you learn about Peter's attempt to dissuade Jesus from going to the cross?

Read Matthew 16:24-26. In light of these verses, what do you think had become a distraction for Peter?

Peter's earthly perspective had become a distraction to him. He was missing the eternal value in what Jesus planned to do, by obeying His Father and going to the cross. He was thinking in terms of his physical life. He loved Jesus and did not want Him to suffer. He also misunderstood the true cost of discipleship. Jesus was illustrating by His own life, that we must be willing to give up everything for the kingdom of God.

To avoid the distraction of a wrong perspective, we must change our focus from self-interest to God-interest.

Distraction #2: Wrong Priorities

Read Luke 10:38-42.

What was Martha's concern?

What was Jesus' response?

What "one thing" did Jesus indicate was necessary? What did He refer to as the "good part" Mary had chosen?

What was Martha's distraction?

Martha's priorities were wrong. She had good intentions; after all, she had invited Jesus into her home and felt responsible for the meal preparations,

hosting, and serving. But her focus had become more about the event, and less about the person she was ministering to...Jesus!

As you think about your perspective on kingdom work, and the priorities which fill up your day to day life, ask God to show you where you may be distracted. Are you more concerned with your self-interests, rather than what God's interests are? Are you distracted by worry, consumed by tasks which keep you from focusing on Christ?

Close your study in prayer, confessing any distractions that may keep you from completing the **mission** God has given you. Thank Him that He hears your prayer, and that His Spirit will protect your mind and heart from any distractions.

Day 4 – Avoiding Excuses

We are masters at making excuses! Most of our excuses come from an inflated sense of self – we are too busy doing other important things. Scripture addresses our tendency to make excuses and gives us the answer to overcoming them. Let's look at two excuses we often make.

Excuse #1: I'm too busy with my life.

Read Luke 9:57-62.

List the excuses given for not immediately following Jesus.

Who did Jesus say was not "fit" for the kingdom of God?

The word "fit" in the Greek is the word *euthetos*. It has the meaning of "well placed, useful, ready for use, or adapted." In other words, Jesus is teaching that unless we are completely committed to our mission of proclaiming everywhere the kingdom of God (verse 60), we will not be *useful* or *ready* for the kingdom of God. When we allow distractions and excuses to hinder our commitment, we will become unusable and useless.

In this passage, Jesus addresses parents and friends. The one who asked to first go and bury his father wasn't simply asking to attend a funeral. He was asking Jesus to wait until his father died before committing to follow. Jesus' response seems harsh, but I believe He was simply stating that spiritual life is more important than physical life. Jesus' followers are to go and proclaim the kingdom of God, and spiritual life would result. Our physical life concerns are secondary. Likewise, the call of God on our lives supersedes the hold that our friends have on us.

Our earthly relationships with our family and friends are important, and the Bible teaches that we should love and care for our parents and be considerate and kind to our friends. But our first priority must be our complete commitment to following Jesus as His disciple. We cannot make excuses by allowing the obligations of our daily life to crowd out our mission to share the gospel of Jesus. If we find we are too busy to get to know our neighbors and fellow employees, so that we are unable to develop relationships in order to share who Jesus is, we must examine our priorities and make adjustments.

How can this principle become practical in your life? What adjustments do you need to make to make room in your schedule to spend time with those who need to hear about Jesus?

Excuse #2: It's harder than I expected!

Read Luke 10:3.

How did Jesus describe the way He was sending out the disciples?

What do you think He was trying to tell them?

Matthew 16:24 – *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.*

To **take up our cross** speaks of death – death to self, death to our flesh. Just as Peter cried out that Jesus simply could not go to the cross because of the pain, humiliation and suffering which would come, we often make excuses not to follow Christ because it is costly and painful.

Jesus said that He sent out His disciples as lambs in the midst of wolves.

Following Christ and serving as His ambassador and minister of reconciliation by sharing the gospel, is not an easy task. Many people do not want to hear about Jesus, because they do not wish to be confronted with their personal sin. Others are satisfied with their life and see no reason to examine spiritual truth or be challenged in their beliefs. Still, others may become angry that you wish to share Jesus. You may be rejected!

Jesus did not paint a rosy, unrealistic picture of what it would mean for the disciples to proclaim the kingdom of God. He was completely honest about the challenges, but He also encouraged them. It is a difficult task, but one that brings great joy and blessing.

What happens when we overcome our excuses and eliminate the distractions to our mission?

Read Luke 10:17-24.

Why did the disciples return with joy?

Why did Jesus say they should rejoice?

The disciples had learned a great secret. There was blessing in seeing the power of God! As we go out into our neighborhoods and workplaces, sharing the message of the gospel, we too, will see the power of God begin to change lives. As God's Spirit opens the eyes of our co-workers and friends to receive salvation, there is great blessing and joy!

Write a prayer asking God to show you any excuses you may be making that prevents you from sharing the gospel with your friends, neighbors and co-workers. Confess any tendency to want to take the easy path of least resistance and ask God to strengthen you with boldness and passion to fulfill your mission.

Day 5 – Teaming Up For The Mission

We’ve all read studies that show the best way to reach a goal is to have a partner. Whether it’s a weight-loss goal, or commitment to exercise, or just forming new habits to improve your life, having someone to walk alongside you and motivate you, as well as provide accountability, always improves your performance.

Jesus knew that we needed each other! The most important task He gave to the disciples was to go out and proclaim the kingdom of God. And He sent them out **two by two**.

Luke 10:1 – Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.

Why do you think Jesus sent the disciples out in pairs? Think about their task. What practical benefits would there be in traveling in pairs?

How does this apply to your mission to reach your neighborhood?

Read Luke 10:2.

What are the disciples to pray for?

Just as Jesus instructed them to pray for laborers for the harvest, we can ask God to send us co-laborers for the harvest in our neighborhood and workplace. Begin praying today for God to allow you to meet other believers in your neighborhood. As you meet them, enlist them in the **mission**.

