

OVER-EXPOSED & UNDER-DEVELOPED
Next Steps Devotional Guide — John 12:22-23
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Sermon Series > The Gospel of John
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1. When was a time in your life you were involved in doing something, but you quit because you could not see the end? Why did you do this and what were the results?
2. I am convinced that the reason more and more Christians are asking to be taken out of the waters of spiritual growth and challenge is not because of exhaustion, or cold or the fear of “sharks” or lack of support - but because a fog has settled in their lives that is obscuring their vision of God’s goal for their growth. Do you agree with any of this? Why or why not?
3. We look at two main goals God has for salvation and discipleship: #1 — God’s goal was for His Son to experience death on the cross. #2 — God’s goal is for every believer to experience death to self. How do these two goals relate? What to you makes “death of self” so challenging?
4. Finally, in John 12:23, Jesus says, “His hour has come . . .” Yet previously in John, He says or the text says just the opposite. You can read these verses from the references in your outline. What has changed to you and what difference does that make now? How did John 12:13 & John 12:19 add to this? From this point on, Jesus’ hour is imminent — see John 13:1; 16:32; & 17:1.
5. God is a giver (John 3:16). Take a moment to read John 12:27-33 in your sermon notes. How does John 12:27-33 reflect that? Read Mark 10:45 in your sermon notes. We love this about Jesus, but do people see this in your own life as well?
6. We looked at 3 great biblical principles that help lift the “fog” and help us not to be over-exposed and under-developed. First, if you want an abundant life, you have to be willing to abandon your life through death of self. Read Jesus’ words in John 12:24 & John 10:10 in your Bible or sermon notes.
 - (a) It seems that Jesus was teaching a paradox — death to self leads to abundant life if you abandon your life. Death to self brings spiritual fruit in one’s life. Look at the list in your sermon notes. Which of these are being produced and which are not?
 - (b) We looked a couple of reasons we might not want to say that to the Lord:
 - i. First, you are voluntarily giving God the right to determine what kind of seed you are and what fruit you will produce. Read 1 Corinthians 12:15, 26 and Matthew 13:31-32 in your sermon notes.
 - Southside, if you want to prove you are a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ, you have to be willing to say Jesus the Vine, “Here I am Lord. I am Your seed. You have determined what kind of seed I am. So instead of me wanting to be the seed I want, I ask that You bury me to be the seed You want.” Will you say that today? Why or why not?
 - Read John the Baptizer’s words in John 3:30 in your sermon. Will you say and live that? Why or why not?
 - ii. Second, because we are voluntarily giving the Lord the right to plant us where He wants. Jesus is the Gardener and we are His seed. Seeds, until they are planted and buried in the cold dirt, cannot grow and produce fruit. How does this relate to your own personal discipleship?
 - Read Luke 9:23-25 in your sermon notes. Christian author Dave Fleming in his book, Deliberate Simplicity, writes this: “*We are convinced that the gap holding back most believers is not the gap between what they know and what they don’t know. It’s the gap between what they know and what they’re living. Many Christians are . . . spiritually educated beyond their obedience*” (Kindle, pp. 515-518). What does he mean and why has this not worked?
 - *Mark Twain once said, “It’s not the things in the Bible that I don’t understand that bother me. It’s the things in the Bible that I do understand that bother me.”* What in the Bible bothers you and why?
 - (c) Besides the Bible picturing God as a Gardener, it also pictures Him as a Potter. Read Isaiah 45:9; Isaiah 64:8; and Jeremiah 18:6 in your sermon notes How are these 2 analogies similar and different? How do these 2 pictures relate to your own discipleship?
7. The second biblical principle that we learned that keeps us from being over-exposed and under-developed is if you want a fulfilling life, you have to voluntarily be willing to forfeit control.
 - (a) Read John 12:25 in your sermon notes or Bible. What is your initial gut reaction to Jesus’ words?
 - (b) In this one verse, Jesus used two different words for “life.” The first one is the Greek New Testament word [ψυχή, pusche] in the first two words translated as life. It is were we get our English word psyche, psychology. This refers to the life of the mind, which is our will, our emotions and our

soul which is physical. The 3rd word translated as “life” is the Greek New Testament word [ζωή, Zoe]. This refers to the spiritual eternal divine life. What significance is this?

- (c) Jesus made three sub-points in John 12:23-26. In what ways does the Lord see you living out these 3 sub-points today?
 - (d) Read Luke 14:26-27 in your sermon outline or Bible. It almost seems that Jesus is contradicting the very Scriptures He gave about loving and honoring parents and family. This is an often misunderstood passage and for good reasons. The Greek New Testament word translated here as “hate” is [μισέω, miseo] and it means “to love less in comparison to something greater. Hate means to not make it the priority. With this understanding, does anything change for you? If so, how? Do Jesus’ words describe you? Why or why not?
 - (e) Former atheists and now Christian apologist, C.S. Lewis puts it this way about discipleship in his book: *“The Christian way is different: harder, and easier. Christ says “Give me All. I don’t want so much of your time and so much of your money and so much of your work: I want You. I have not come to torment your natural self, but to kill it. No half—measures are any good. I don’t want to cut off a branch here and a branch there, I want to have the whole tree down. I don’t want to drill the tooth, or crown it, or stop it, but to have it out. Hand over the whole natural self, all the desires which you think innocent as well as the ones you think wicked—the whole outfit. I will give you a new self instead. In fact, I will give you Myself: My own will shall become yours” (Mere Christianity, Apple Books, p. 178).* What do you think of Lewis’ quote and why?
 - (f) Question: Are you willing to abandon your will, your desires, your emotions, your passions and die to self so that Jesus can plant you where He needs you so that you can produce the fruit of discipleship?
 - (g) People whose priorities are right have such an attitude of love for the things of God that all the affairs of this life appear by comparison as hatred. For many modern day churches, they have a non-threatening recruitment strategy — no guilt, no conviction of sin, all make me feel good about myself. Why does this not work to follow Jesus?
 - (h) Jesus is telling us that if we want to serve Him, we don’t get to do what we want. Why? Because we first have to be willing to die to everything self so that we get to do what His God’s will. Why is death to self the only way? Read Galatians 2:20 and Galatians 5:24 in your sermon notes or Bible. Why does discipleship, following Jesus, why does death to self have to be the first step?
8. The third biblical principle we learned that that keeps us from being over-exposed and under-developed is if you want to be honored like a child of the King, you have to be willing to serve like a slave in His kingdom.
- (a) Read John 12:26. One of the things Jesus says is that discipleship comes down to what position to you want in His kingdom. Are most of your prayers about you and your needs, or about asking the Lord to show you where He is already working so you can join Him? Explain.
 - (b) For years the church sang a hymn, “Wherever He Leads, I’ll Go.” Will you follow your Christ wherever He leads you? Why or why not?
 - (c) We learned there are 2 big blessings from doing this:
 - i. The promise of continual communion. Read John 12:26a and Colossians 1:10 in your sermon notes or Bible. How do these verses state this point?
 - ii. The promise of divine commendation. Read John 12:26b, 2 Corinthians 5:10, & Revelation 20:11-15 in your sermon notes or Bible. Do you think you will experience this on Judgement Day? If so, why? I not, why?
 - (d) In John 12:26, Jesus uses the word “honor.” This is the Greek New Testament word [τιμάω, timao]. This word means to reward, compensate and esteem.
 - (e) In your bulletin was a white sheet of paper that simply reads: signature. Would you today sign your name to it saying to the Lord: “I have accepted God’s will without knowing what it is, with no strings attached, and I am leaving it to Him to fill in the details.”