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## REFLECTIONS

# MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP

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### *Jesus: The Greatest Evangelizer*

Marks Gospel begins, "The beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." (*Mark 1:1*) These words are the earliest Gospel testimony to Jesus Christ. They tell us that Jesus Christ himself, God's Good News, is the first and greatest evangelizer. He came to proclaim the Kingdom of God, at the center of which is salvation, whereby we are liberated from all oppression, especially from sin and Satan, through the death and resurrection of Jesus. (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, # 8-9: 27)

Early in his ministry, Jesus initiated us into evangelizing activity when asked by two disciples of John the Baptist, "... where are you staying?" In response, Jesus invited them to "come and see". (*Jn. 1:38-39*), thus inviting them to get to know him in the personal setting of his home.

Jesus' hospitality in bringing them into closer relationship with him sets the stage for his subsequent calling them to follow him as disciples. Jesus did not begin to preach to them or discourse about the kingdom of God immediately. His approach helps subsequent evangelizers recognize the vital importance of the personal dimension in dealing with those who search for God or life's meaning.

In a world, focused on individualism and geared toward the impersonal, to welcome someone into a closer relationship with the Lord through how we treat them is a powerful witness to the designs of God. In meditating on Jesus' approach, we learn that God is love through the love of others, not through format doctrine.



Jesus set the stage for how he communicated God's Word by his everyday encounters, like his meeting the Samaritan woman at the well, forgiving a woman being stoned, healing a paralytic dropped through the roof of a house, and raising a dead child to life. His life set the stage for his preaching. It created a culture of faith that those around him desperately needed.

After witnessing his kindness, forgiveness, focus on his Father, and compassion for the poor, Jesus' credibility grew, and people flocked to hear him. They accepted his preached Word, because they witnessed his Words in the flesh. His personal life and miracles combined with his words to set the stage for accepting his message of salvations as coming from God.

From Jesus, the greatest evangelizer, we learn that our life witness and the words we teach or preach meld into one for those who strive to follow the Lord. This challenges us to strive to be a model of faith for our families, friends, and neighbors. We do this every time we show good example and proclaim Word of God to children, youth, and adults.

## QUESTION

**What qualities of Jesus are vital for an effective evangelizer?**