

2019 BGM Delta

Short-term Mission Trip Training Handbook



JONESTOWN

BGM

#bgmmsdelta

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1. TEAM TRAINING SESSIONS

A Team Leader's biggest role is to make sure that you "set the table" so that each team member is prepared for your short-term trip. We have included a brief 5-session outline that will give you an idea of how to use the devotions that are included in this book.

BGM believes that a quality training session should include 2 components in content: Transformation and Information.

- **Transformation** occurs when the heart is confronted in such a way that it is then re-directed toward change. It may be a change of concern, belief, care or understanding but the team member walks out of that session with a desire to change.
- **Information** occurs when clear and accurate details are communicated in such a way that each person has mental understanding which will allow for a successful outcome.

We realize that many of you reading this have already led a Short-term mission trip before, so we don't want to make any negative implications. However, we would ask that you prayerfully consider how God might lead you to apply some of our training suggestions!

Before your first Team Training Session:

- Be sure that you as the Team Leader have watched all of our training videos
- Incorporate small groups into your trip experience – This will allow your team to get to know one another in a deeper way as you prepare to serve in Jonestown.
- Have some team training date options already prepared in your calendar – Be sure to confirm those dates before the end of the first session with your team.
- Make sure that there aren't many conflicting issues with your team training dates on your church calendar – Communicate these with a staff member.
- From the extra resources we have provided, select a couple that best fits your team and will aid in the transformation and information journey as you prepare!

Session 1 (suggested thoughts)

1. Introduce team
 - a) Have them tell something about themselves
 - b) Discuss why they believe they need to be on this short-term mission trip
 - c) Discuss the importance of being present for Team Training Sessions

2. Have them watch the “Jonestown Overview” video -- Discuss what they heard, observed or learned from the video

3. Transformation Moment
 - a) Break team up into Small Groups
 - b) Read BGM Devotional: “Be Prepared”**
 - c) Discuss the questions together in small group or as a whole
 - d) Application – What will you do as a team to apply what you learned?
 - e) PRAY – For one another and small group

4. Information Moment
 - a) Get back together as a team

Walk through any information you need from them as a leader: Example - Submit **MS Delta Participant Information and Release Form** online. <https://www.butgodministries.com/ms-delta-forms/>

- b) Begin an early discussion on what “projects” you are discussing with our Team Project Coordinator

5. Next Step
 - a) Assign homework to group -- **Read BGM Devotional: “Be Humble”**
 - b) Remind them of being present for Team training sessions
 - c) Prayer and Dismiss

Session 2

1. Introduction
 - a) Take roll if necessary
 - b) Take up any paperwork – Ex. BGM paperwork
 - c) Collect T-shirt sizes – (if anyone wants a BGM Shirt – \$20 -- Get to Team Project Coordinator)

2. Transformation Moment
 - a) Take a brief time to discuss as a group the questions from the “Be Humble” devotion.
 - b) Challenge each member on cross-cultural relationships – What will they do outside of the session to “be prepared” and grow in humility?

3. Information Moment
 - a) Team project information –

4. Transformation Moment
 - a) Get together in small groups – **Read “Be Flexible” Devotion**
 - b) Discuss questions together
 - c) How will they keep each other accountable?
 - d) PRAY – For one another and small group

5. Next Step
 - a)** Assign team homework – **Read BGM devotional: “Be Intentional”**
 - b) Remind them of being present for team training sessions
 - c) Pray and dismiss

Session 3

1. Introduction
 - a) Take roll if necessary
 - b) Ask if participant has submitted form to BGM.

2. Transformation Moment
 - a) Take a brief time to discuss as a group the questions from the “Be Intentional” devotion.
 - b) Challenge each member on cross-cultural relationships – What will they do outside of the session to “be intentional”?

3. Information Moment
 - a) Team project information –

4. Transformation Moment
 - a) Get together in small groups – *Read “Be Open” Devotion***
 - b) Discuss questions together
 - c) Break up into groups of 2 or 3 –
 - a. Write out a short version of your testimony – 30 Seconds version and 5-minute version
 - b. Practice sharing your salvation testimony with your partners – Both Versions
 - d) PRAY – For one another and Small Group

5. Next Step
 - a) Assign team homework – ***Read BGM devotional: “Do Good”***
 - b) Remind them of being present for team training sessions
 - c) Pray and dismiss

Session 4

1. Introduction
 - a) Take roll if necessary
 - b) Trip details – Ex. Schedule, Food menu is decided and turned in – Get to Team Project Coordinator

2. Transformation Moment
 - a) Take a brief time to discuss as a group the questions from the “Do Good” devotion.
 - b) Challenge each member on cross-cultural relationships – What will they do outside of the session to “Do Good”?

3. Information Moment
 - a) Team Project Information –

4. Transformation Moment
 - a)** Get together in small groups – **Read “Do Learn” Devotion**
 - b) Discuss questions together
 - c) How will they keep each other accountable?

5. Next Step
 - a)** Assign team homework – **Read BGM devotional: “Do More”**
 - b) Remind them of being present for team training sessions
 - c) Pray and dismiss

Session 5 – Final Team Session

1. Introduction –
 - a) Take roll –
 - b) Last minute questions – See FAQ on website:
<https://www.butgodministries.com/faq/> for potential answers

2. Transformation Moment –
 - a) Get into Small Groups –
 - b) Take a brief time to discuss the questions from the “Do More” devotion.
 - c) PRAY – For your week and Small Group

3. Information Moment –
 - a) Make sure that all Team project information is taken care of – Everyone knows their role and what they are responsible for

4. Transformation Moment –
 - a) Read and Discuss **BGM devotional: “Do Love”** -- as a whole team
 - b) What will you do in light of what God showed you?
 - c) Take some time together to discuss what God has taught you through your outside assignments and activities.

5. Next Step –
 - a) Make sure everyone knows your departure date and time – Clearly communicate this with Team Project Coordinator
 - b) Make sure any cell phone numbers are exchanged – Particularly if you are leading a student group
 - c) Make sure your team has extra cash on hand if they want to purchase outside items: Ex. BGM t-shirt, Souvenir’s
 - d) PRAY for our BGM Delta Team and your week in Jonestown
 - e) Dismiss

Post-trip Team Ideas

- Get back together with your team – Have someone host a small dinner or party
- Reflect on what God did in your team and in each member
- How is your local community going to be different because of your short-term mission in Jonestown?
- How might God want you to partner with BGM Delta in the long-term?
- Pray for our BGM Delta Team

3. TEAM VALUE DEVOTIONALS

Our BGM Delta team thoughtfully and prayerfully identified 9 values that give a picture of what it looks like for a short-term mission team to live out “Being before Doing.” We have written a devotion on each one that includes small group questions for your team to discuss during your training session.

Be Prepared

“Do your planning and **prepare** your fields before building your house.” -- Proverbs 24:27

“You yourselves know how plainly I told you, ‘I am not the Messiah. I am only here to **prepare** the way for him.’” – John 3:28

“There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to **prepare** a place for you?” – John 14:2

“Preach the word of God. **Be prepared**, whether the time is favorable or not...” -- 2 Timothy 4:2

Olympic athletes amaze me! Like most of you, every four years, I set aside time with the rest of the world to watch these competitors live out their passion and calling. Some of my favorite moments are the interviews of each athlete as they tell the story of their preparation process during the four “off years.” The time and discipline invested, the money spent, the climate conditions studied, the counseling and coaching they endured to be well mentally and emotionally - All of these things for one moment. Only one moment! It blows my mind.

You have a “moment” that is coming up – except this is a moment that could impact eternity! The question is: Will you choose to invest in the preparation process? Of course, there are many faith moments that we simply can’t be 100% prepared and ready for...that’s why we have to have faith. What I’m simply asking is if you are willing to “prepare as if it depends on you but pray as if it depends on God?”

We see through the wisdom of Solomon, the lives of guys like John the Baptist and Paul, but most importantly through Jesus our Savior, that preparation is a vital component of living out our personal callings. Considering this, as you prepare for your short-term mission trip to Jonestown, it’s important for you to be prepared in three different areas: Spiritually, Physically, and Culturally. Below, I’m going to list some practical examples and “Things to Know”.

Spiritual Preparation:

- Invite a prayer partner into your preparation journey.
- In your own community, spend some time with another Believer who is different from you – Learn to listen and ask questions that are important to them.
- Pick a time to fast and pray for your trip.
- There is much spiritual warfare in the MS Delta – Read Ephesians 6 each day and practice “Putting on the armor of God”

Physical Preparation:

- We walk a lot in Jonestown! If you are not used to this, it would be beneficial to begin walking a little each day.

- Be aware of the weather conditions (especially in the summer) – We work outside the majority of the time – Prepare by drinking plenty of fluids each day (hopefully you’re doing that anyway)
- Practice paying attention to your complaining – I know this sounds silly, but a positive and faith-filled attitude is vital to a successful mission experience! (especially when its 100 degrees outside!)

Cultural Preparation:

- Time looks different here – the value is placed on relationships instead of doing tasks – It’s not wrong, it’s just different. Be aware of any pre-conceived judgements you may have in your heart and ask the Holy Spirit to give you grace and patience.
- Communication is different here – Jonestown says “hello” by honking their horns. Literally! As we walk about and this occurs, just smile and wave back. Begin paying attention to how differently people communicate in your own town. Practice embracing this instead of resisting.
- “Desperate people do desperate things” – You will see many desperate people here living lifestyles that are most likely completely opposite from yours. Remember that they simply want to be loved and seen, not feared and rejected. One way to prepare for this is by placing yourself around “desperate” people (obviously in a safe context). Perhaps there is a local ministry in your area that you could serve with – Practice loving instead of fearing.

Small Group Questions:

1. Pick one of the four Scriptures above to discuss. What type of preparation is the author addressing? What does preparation look like in this passage? What might have happened if preparation didn’t occur? How can you apply this to your own life? How can you apply this to your Short-term mission trip to Jonestown?
2. “Prepare/Work as if it depends upon you; Pray as if it depends upon God” – What do you think this quote is saying? How can you apply this to your mission trip team?
3. Out of the 3 preparation areas listed, which one might be the most challenging for you? Which one might cause the most hesitation or fear? Why is that? Discuss it with your mission trip team.

What will you do to prepare in this area?

Be Humble

“Humble yourself under Gods powerful hand so he will lift you up when the right time comes...”

– I Peter 5:6 (NCV)

Mission itself is truly a humbling experience. Holman's Bible Dictionary defines Mission as *“a task on which God sends a person He has called...to introduce another group of people to salvation in Christ.”* In the Christian Context the person sent is called a missionary. This person is charged with the task of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ to people to whom they are sent. The mission of the churches is to send our missionaries to all parts of the world until everyone has had the opportunity to hear the message of Jesus and accept Him as Lord.” While the term “mission” is not found in the Scriptures, we can sense its concept throughout the entire Bible. People that were set apart such as Paul, Peter and James submitted themselves to the Holy Spirit and were separated to take the Gospel into the various regions. Ask yourself: Have I been called? This is something to be very prayerful about.

It is a humbling experience to enter a community that is culturally different from you when you are a stranger. There will be many needs that you observe during your time here. Maybe your team will be addressing some of these needs, so it's crucial that you walk in humility as the hands and feet of Jesus. Some of the things you will address are likely to meet the physical needs of the person. This is a part of mission as well. Meeting the physical is easy, but remember that your main task is to introduce someone to Jesus Christ and His plan for salvation. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:22, “To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might save some.” I encourage you to humble yourself and be attentive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and watch God lift you in His power, in His timing, and in His way.

As you go about your task on your mission in our community, humble yourselves by praying with a stranger, crying with a stranger, laughing with a stranger, sharing the Good News and yes, by serving. Pour out yourselves in the act of humility. In John 13, Christ washed the disciple's feet and left instructions that we were to do the same. We are to humble ourselves as Christ did being obedient in service and to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

Being humble does not just entail giving of oneself or serving. There is another side to humility, and that is *receiving*. In Jonestown, you will likely be approached by people from all walks of life. Some of them may be willing to share no matter how little or how much they may have. Humble yourselves in the act of acceptance. We are most humble when we can receive. It's important for you to understand that this is our way of saying “Welcome, we are happy that you are here!”

Our community may not only offer their time and conversation, but something tangible as well. If you are offered a bottle of water, a small snack, or maybe even a meal, accept it in thanksgiving. This is our way of saying “I can't do much to show my appreciation, but I am willing to do what I can.”

Above all, be humble enough to receive in your spirit. Mission is a great teacher for life and spiritual growth. Let's keep in mind that as believers, we define humility different from the world. The world looks at humility as a weakness, but we know that when we are weak then His strength is made perfect in us. By humbling ourselves under his mighty hand, we allow Him to use us as he pleases and in His timing!

Small Group Questions:

1. Read 1 Corinthians 9:22 --
 - a. Why would Paul be willing to “become weak”?
 - b. How can I apply this passage to my mission preparation?
 - c. What are some things, attitudes, habits, etc... that God might ask me to “lay down” while I’m in Jonestown?

2. What is my motive for this trip?

3. Why do I believe God wants me on this trip?

4. If humility is both giving and receiving, which area do I need to specifically ask God to grow me in? Why is that?

5. What do I believe God wants me to personally accomplish on this short-term mission trip?

Be Flexible

“A person’s heart plans his way, but the LORD determines his steps.” – Proverbs 16:9

“His thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways are as far as the earth is from the heavens.” --
Isaiah 55: 8-9

Commitment, responsibility and dedication are some qualities that are required in a missionary, but flexibility is also important. We know that mission opportunities should not be taken lightly and should be prayed through a great deal, but one thing you can count on, is that they will always take us out of our comfort zones.

We often make plans without praying for God's guidance. When we plan in our own timing, strength, knowledge, and resources, it's easy to limit the value of the experience and begin excluding our Father and His almighty power. When you include the Holy Spirit in your planning from the beginning, He becomes your road map that will get you to where you're going. Our BGM team desire's that your short-term mission team in our community be effective and you can be sure that it will require flexibility.

Being flexible is definitely not easy. It's a learning experience, but is a necessary one, especially when we might have to abandon "our" plans and step into what God is leading at the moment. There are many examples in Scripture to learn from, including the life of Paul.

Paul was flexible to the prompting of the Holy Spirit as his plans were changed while he preached in Asia. He was prompted in a vision by a man in Macedonia pleading for him to come over and help, so he decided to change his plans. Had he not been flexible, he would have missed an awesome opportunity to minister to the people in that area. In his flexibility, he drew many to salvation like Lydia and her family and the Roman jailer and his family.

As you prepare, ask the Holy Spirit to help you keep in step with His plans so that you don't miss an opportunity for true mission. As you are preparing to "be flexible," doors will be opened in the most unusual ways to share the Good News of Christ.

Small Group Questions:

1. Read Acts 16 –
 - a. What did you learn about being flexible from this story?
 - b. What was the result of Paul setting aside his plans?
 - c. How can you apply this story as you prepare for your trip to Jonestown?
2. What are some ways I will prepare to recognize an opportunity to be flexible? How can I apply that to my life right now?
3. What might it cost me or others if I miss the opportunity to be flexible?

Be Intentional

When Jesus came by, He looked up at Zaccheus and called him by name. “Zaccheus!” he said. “Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today.” Luke 19:5 (NLT)

I’m sure that you are familiar with the Bible Story about Zaccheus. We typically get caught up in the fact that Zaccheus was a “wee little man,” and miss out on this amazing story of intentionality and life change!

Jesus was on a mission with his disciples to Jerusalem (that would ultimately be for His death), but he took a route that would take him through Jericho. Interestingly, this was the only recorded visit that Jesus made to Jericho. He had been teaching his disciples as well as multitudes of others along the journey, had just healed a blind man on the outskirts of town, and he was probably weary physically and emotionally - maybe even hungry and just wishing for a minute of quiet to regroup.

Have you ever been there? You’ve had a hectic morning getting everyone ready for school and work. You get stuck in traffic. You spill something on your shirt on the drive. Your phone is ringing as you walk into your office, and the emails have piled up overnight. The last thing you really want is a coworker popping in your office to just chat. However, those opportunities are the ones that we have to be prepared for, and actually, if we want to do things the way Jesus did, those opportunities are the ones we need to be *watching* for. Jesus modeled what it means to be intentional with people as he dealt with Zaccheus. He could have easily stayed on schedule and kept walking past the tree where Zaccheus was perched. He could have kept on waving and smiling at the crowds that lined the road around him as he hurried on to Jerusalem. But Jesus was **looking** for someone whose heart was open to salvation. Jesus stopped the whole procession, looked up at Zaccheus, and called him out by name. Zaccheus...that despicable tax collector, that sinful cheat, of all people to stop for! Notice the intensity in Jesus’ words: “Quick, come down! I MUST go to your house...”

While it would make more sense to us that Zaccheus would want to hide from the perfect, sinless Son of God, something is going on in his heart. Zaccheus joyfully brings Jesus to his home, restores above and beyond what is required to those he has cheated, and then gives half of his wealth to the poor. He didn’t do those things to earn his salvation. Rather, Zaccheus did these things *because* of his salvation. Imagine what an impact Zaccheus had on his family, neighbors, and community for the Kingdom of God...All because Jesus was intentional about seeking and saving that which was lost.

As you prepare to go to Jonestown, make it a priority to ask God to continually open your spirit eyes and spirit ears to *see and hear* people whose hearts He may be preparing even now. As you walk down the road, work on a project, share a meal, be mindful of people. Don’t pass up those little nudgings of the Spirit to speak to someone or to do something that seems a little strange to you. Someone’s salvation and eternity could hang in the balance.

Further Reading:

Ephesians 5:16-17 “Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don’t act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.” (NLT)

Small Group Questions:

Would you say that your life more closely resembles that of Jesus (as he dealt with Zaccheus) or someone who must stay on schedule?

What are some practical ways to Be Intentional as you go about your regular schedule?

What are some ways that you have been impacted by someone else’s intentionality?

How can you practically prepare your heart so that you are ready when the opportunity to be intentional arises?

Pray for God to place on your heart someone that you can be intentional with - now, and as you go on mission, so that you will be prepared when the time is right.

Be Open

“Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.” Isaiah 43:18-19

Many times we come into a new experience, such as a mission trip, with preconceived ideas of how it will be based on what others have experienced, what we have read about, or maybe even our own past experiences. However, it's good to remember that every mission trip is a new experience. If you have gone to Haiti with But God Ministries, you may have a general knowledge and understanding of the way things work, but your experience in the MS Delta will be different. As hard as it is to comprehend, the culture in the MS Delta is different from anything else you may have experienced. And that's okay!

God gives us many different life experiences that are meant to be shared with others. I imagine your mission team, like every other mission team, is made up of many different personalities, skill sets, and life experiences. When viewed properly, those differences can make a team amazing, and that team will impact the people they are serving. Each of you has a story to tell. I've heard people say that they don't really have a great, interesting testimony to share. I disagree with that! Any story of life change is a story worth sharing. Whether you were delivered from a deep depression, strong addiction, or were saved as a young child, you have a story, and God **expects** us to share it with other people!

You are not a part of this mission by accident. God works in ways that we cannot understand, and as Paul tells us in Romans 8:28, *“God works all things together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to His purposes.”* God is the One who draws hearts to go on mission. He is the one who gifts and equips teams for certain projects. And He is the One who is glorified when we work together in unity as a team to see His will and plan played out and accomplished!

I encourage you to keep an open mind. Set aside whatever thoughts or ideals that you have coming into this mission experience. Open your heart and hands to the Holy Spirit's leading. Embrace the new. Share your past experiences. Watch God do new things in and through you!

Further Reading:

“And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” Romans 12:1-2 (NLT)

Small Group Questions:

What are some ideals or expectations that you currently have regarding your trip to the MS Delta?

What are some things that you are uncertain or anxious about?

What unique experiences, skills or giftings do you have that you feel will be beneficial for this particular mission?

Are you willing to share your story -the good, the bad, and the ugly- with others when the opportunity arises?

If you are not confident sharing your faith, write out your testimony and began sharing it with friends so that you can become more confident in that.

Do Good

“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers...” – Galatians 6:10

Doing good should be a top priority for every Christian as we are instructed to follow Christ and his earthly ministry, which was filled with acts of kindness. We must understand that we will not be saved because of our good works, but we do good works because we are saved. We know that salvation only comes by grace as Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast.”

It is good that you have committed to serve our community on this short-term mission trip, and we believe it is not a coincidence that the Holy Spirit has lead you here for this time. In serving on this mission trip you will provide encouragement to some and hope to others. We ask you to keep your spiritual eyes open as you are presented with many opportunities to do good. Remember that your service will be used to provide miracles in someone’s life, which can be viewed in different ways. Whether the opportunity is having a short conversation with someone or sharing the Gospel with them at the right place and time, no task is too small. This could be the very opportunity needed to provide “light” in a situation that may seem very dark.

However, “doing good” does not always seem good. Sometimes we are rejected when we reach out in love to do a good deed or offer a word of encouragement for someone whose life has been so bruised and battered. It may seem as if the deed is not recognized or acknowledged. It is in these times, when we must trust God and obey, praying that the seed planted will take root and grow.

We do good because of the love, peace and joy that it brings. These are also attributes of the fruit of the Spirit. Why do we do good? We are to be an example letting our light shine that men may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven.

Small Group Questions:

1. How do you currently define good?
2. What does “good” look like to you?
3. Do you believe that “doing good” can be counterfeited? Why/Why not? Name and discuss an example of when “doing good” might have been hurtful.
4. How can we tell if the “good” shown is sincere?

Do Learn

“Intelligent people are always ready to learn. Their ears are open for knowledge.”

– Proverbs 18:15

“Kelly, God gave you two ears and one mouth for a reason!” I’m pretty certain I’m not the only one who heard this “wonderfully encouraging” piece of wisdom from their mother growing up. For the life of me, I can’t fathom what she was trying to imply either... (insert the sarcastic and rolling of the eyes emoji right here). No, I definitely knew what she was saying to me! I didn’t come into this world with a natural desire to listen... I wanted to get my point across!

But for those of us who know Christ, we are called to something different. We are called to Love Him and Love others and to accomplish that, we must become students... we must become learners! When we look in God’s Word we see how God connects learning with listening, something I clearly lacked as a child and am still developing to this day. When we take the time to step into someone else’s world with our ears, we learn more of what it means to be like Christ.

Our prayer and desire for teams that come on a short-term trip to Jonestown is that you make a choice to come as a Learner! But what does that mean and what does that look like? Author and Missionary, Duane Elmer, defines **Learning** as “The ability to glean relevant information about, from and with other people.” I love that! In his book, *Cross-Cultural Servanthood*, he gives great insight into each one of these areas of Learning!

Learning about others

- “Learning about helps us check and better adjust our expectations against reality. Learning about should generate questions that will help us probe more deeply into the culture once we arrive.”
- “A prepared list of questions and issues to probe more deeply will allow you to enter many information-rich conversations. Learning about gives us an initial orientation to a new culture – it’s a great place to start.”
- “However, the major danger of learning about is that we may think, even unconsciously, that now we know the people of the other culture. We can turn others into objects. We can create dependent relationships. We can form stereotypes...”

So we must not stop here...

Learning from others

- “When we learn from someone, it is one of the great honors we bestow on them. When we ask questions, seek understanding and probe their thoughts, we are saying, in effect: I need you to teach me. I can’t do this alone.”
- “The act of listening shows respect for the speaker and helps build a sense of community.”

“Asking others to teach us not only honors them but also gives them permission to tell us what they actually see, feel, know, and experience.”

But, let’s keep going...

Learning with others

- “This wonderful form of learning assumes that the best learning happens in relationship, in mutuality, in partnership where neither side is above or beneath.”
- “Respectful interaction between two people benefits both. Each depends on the other. This interdependence produces a kind of life together that regularly mediates Christ, each to the other.”
- “By learning from and with each other, we sharpen our vision and practice in ways that could never happen alone. We need each other. Our connected lives and cultures make us better people.”

Further Reading:

Matthew 9:13 – Then he added, “now, go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: ‘I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.’ For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.”

John 6:45 – As it is written in the scriptures, ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who listens to the Father and **learns** from him comes to me.

Small Group Questions:

1. Have you ever experienced a learning opportunity in another culture before? Discuss that experience with your group. What did you learn? How did God change you? What did you learn through listening?
2. Learning about –
 - a. Take some time to prepare your own personal list of open-ended questions. What are some things you are curious to learn about from our local community in Jonestown?
 - b. Pick one or 2 learning options below and begin prayerfully asking God what He could teach you through this mission experience:
 - <http://www.city-data.com/city/Jonestown-Mississippi.html>
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonestown,_Coahoma_County,_Mississippi
 - <http://www.coahomacounty.net/>
 - <https://coahoma.msghn.org/>
 - <http://www.coahoma.k12.ms.us/>
3. Learning from/with – Take some time to pursue a learning experience with someone from your local community that is from a different culture than you. What did you learn? What questions did you ask? What, if any, hesitations did you have?

Do More

“The master said, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many **more** responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’
Matthew 25:23

“To those who use well what they are given, even **more** will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away.”
Matthew 25:29

“Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for **more**, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.” Luke 6:38

Further reading: Parable of the Talents – Matthew 25: 14-30

Do you remember when you first learned to do a new and challenging task as a young kid? For me, it was swimming. I remember the nervous excitement I felt as I was encouraged by Coach Craig to jump out of that chair (all the chairs were literally sitting in the shallow end of the pool) and go under water to get my colored golf ball. Up until this point, I had been baby pool bound. It was nice, but quite limited. My heart yearned to go for more and to step out into the large ocean that I called a pool. However, when it was time to make the leap, the pounding of my heart and my feelings were screaming at me to stay put - to stay baby pool bound. But I would have none of it... because there was more. More pool to experience. More fun to embrace... like nailing the high dive! The reality is that God had given me the talent and ability to swim but I had to step out beyond what I had been limited to and go after more!

God is a God of more! That statement may not sit well with you at first, but as we look at the Scripture references above and read the story of the parable of the talents, this truth becomes clear. God gives us different amounts of talents, abilities, and experiences on this earth so that we will embrace them and take responsibility over how He might want to use each one to expand and grow His Kingdom! And the crazy thing about the goodness of God is that as we use what He’s given us, He has promised to give us more! More grace, more faith, more resources, more courage, more provision is actually what He desires for me and you! So, what are you waiting for? What’s holding you back? Well, a lot of things can threaten us to stay in the “shallow end” of life instead of diving into God’s more, can’t they? We are no different from the servants in the Parable from Matthew 25, are we?

From this passage and from my own life, some of the big threats I see revolve around the ugly F-word called FEAR - Fear of the unknown, fear of what others might think of us, fear of God (in an unhealthy way), and fear of what we perceive as failure. But I’m asking you to not listen to those voices or those feelings!

We desire that each person who partners with us on a short-term mission team in Jonestown becomes a conduit for God to flow through so that His Kingdom will be brought to

our community. And the truth is that in order for that to occur, it is crucial that you DO MORE! Do more than you think you can, because that's always when God shows up! Instead of settling for a "nice mission trip," step out of your comfort zone and what you believe are limitations, and let God take your "few" and multiply into more!

Small Group Questions:

1. Read and discuss Matthew 25: 14-30. Which servant do you currently most reflect? What do you have that God has given you? What are you doing with it? How are you seeing God "do more" in your life? If not, why do you think that is? What does it look like for you to be faithful in preparing for this mission trip? What limitations and fears might prevent you from "doing more"?
2. In your current season of life, what abilities and gifts do you see that God could use on your short-term mission trip to Jonestown?
3. How do you pray that God "does more" for your mission team during this trip?

Do Love

“Little children (believers, dear ones), **let us not love** [merely in theory] **with word or with tongue** [giving lip service to compassion], **but in action and in truth** [in practice and in sincerity, because practical acts of love are more than words.” 1 John 3:18 (Amplified Bible)

I don't know about you, but when I read the above Scripture, it is very convicting! I say that I love people – and I do love people. But do I *really* love people the way God expects me to - the way that God loves me? Love is a verb. Love requires action and intentionality on our part.

If you have felt God calling you to join this mission team to serve in Jonestown, MS, then you have begun to understand that love begins with obedience to God's call. You may be wondering what to expect, or how love in action may be played out on this trip. It could be playing games or teaching our kids. It could be holding or comforting a little one who is unsure about being left with strangers. It may be mowing grass, cleaning buildings, or setting up for an event. Maybe you will be doing a project at someone's home or prayer walking in the community. Hopefully you will have an opportunity to just speak to someone or offer a smile or a hug or a handshake. All of those are love in action. Every person needs to know that they are loved - by God and by others. You, me, all of us who are born again believers and followers of Christ are **commanded** to *'love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.'* There is nothing more important than those two things, and those are also very important values of our MS Delta team.

I'm reminded of the parable of the Good Samaritan. As you may remember, a man was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was robbed and beaten and left half dead on the road. A priest comes along, but when he saw the man he moved to the other side of the road and kept walking. Next, a Levite happens by and also moved to the other side and continued on his way. Next, a Samaritan saw the man, had pity on him, bandaged up his wounds, put the man on his own donkey and then paid for him to be cared for. Jesus asked the question, "Which of these was a neighbor to the man?" Of course, we know the answer is the 'Good Samaritan.' But I challenge you to go back and really *read* this passage, put yourself in each of these people's shoes, and see where your attitudes line up. This is how the Life Application Study Bible commentary breaks it down:

- To the expert in the law, the wounded man was a subject to discuss.
- To the robbers, the wounded man was someone to use and exploit.
- To the religious men, the wounded man was a problem to be avoided.
- To the innkeeper, the wounded man was a customer to serve for a fee.
- To the Samaritan, the wounded man was a human being worth being cared for and loved.
- To Jesus, ALL of them (and all of us) were worth dying for.

Our mission statement for the BGM Delta Team is centered around the idea of "Being

before Doing.” Essentially that means that we value loving on people even more than accomplishing planned activities or projects. Would you begin now to develop this mindset - to value time spent building relationships with people more than staying busy with tasks? Why is this important? Go back up to 1 John 3:18.... “because practical acts of love are more than words.”

For Further Reading: Luke 10:25-37

Small Group Questions:

Why do you think that we value ‘Being before Doing?’ What steps could you take to begin to form a mindset of being over doing?

What obstacles, if any, can you identify within yourself that need to be overcome in order for you to love like Jesus expects us to?

These are the questions I challenged myself with as I studied through the Luke 10 passage again (And the answers that God revealed in my heart were not all pretty!). Take some time to study the passage and then honestly answer these questions:

- (1) Am I too busy to be bothered with other people’s problems?
- (2) Do I avoid getting involved in messy situations?
- (3) Do I have a ‘what’s in it for me?’ mindset about helping others?
- (4) Do I try to justify my reasons for not stepping in to love and care for others?

4. SUGGESTED TEAM TRAINING RESOURCES

Whether you are leading a team of students or adults, having access to quality training material is vital! We have included a list of our top favorite ones! The direct links listed here can also be accessed from our page: <https://www.butgodministries.com/delta> (Coming soon!)

1. Helping without Hurting in Short-term Missions – by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert
 - This resource comes with a Leader’s and Participant’s guide. I would suggest purchasing both. Click below to find item:
 - Helping Without Hurting:
https://www.christianbook.com/helping-without-hurting-missions-leaders-guide/steve-corbett/9780802412294/pd/412294?product_redirect=1&Ntt=412294&item_code=&Ntk=keywords&event=ESRCP
2. Cross-Cultural Servanthood – “Serving the World in Christlike Humility” – by Duane Elmer
 - This resource is one of the best books I have read that gives an accurate description of what it is like to experience a cross-culture environment, whether it is short-term or long-term. I would highly suggest this book as a team read! Click below to find item:
 - Cross Cultural Servanthood:
https://www.christianbook.com/cultural-servanthood-serving-world-christlike-humility/duane-elmer/9780830833788/pd/33785?product_redirect=1&Ntt=33785&item_code=&Ntk=keywords&event=ESRCP
3. LeaderTreks Ministry Resources –
 - These resources are some of the best out there for students. They can be tailored for college and adults a well! Click below to find item:
 - LeaderTreks Mission Resources:
<https://www.leadertreks.org/store/section/mission-trips/>
4. Mission Trip Prep Kit – by Kevin Johnson
 - This resource focuses on training middle and high school students. Click below to find item:
 - Mission Trip Prep Kit:
https://www.christianbook.com/missions-trip-prep-kit-leaders-guide/kevin-johnson/9780310244882/pd/4889X?product_redirect=1&Ntt=4889X&item_code=&Ntk=keywords&event=ESRCP

5. Deep Justice Journeys – by Kara Powell and Brad Griffin

- These resources give creative elements and activities for an effective mission trip training session – Select whichever might fit in your schedule, whether you're leading students or adults – and I promise, it will be worth it! Click below to find this resource:
- Deep Justice Journeys:
https://www.christianbook.com/deep-justice-journeys-leaders-guide/kara-powell/9780310286035/pd/286035?product_redirect=1&Ntt=286035&item_code=&Ntk=keywords&event=ESRCP