

All In

When Jesus is your Plan "A"
you don't need Plan "B".



Magnolia Bible Church Men's Group

Thursday Nights at 6:30 PM | October 11 – November 15, 2018 (Lesson #6)

In this series we're talking about the "All In" concept. *All in* means totally committed, no turning back, reaching the point of no return, burning the boats, and leaving it all on the field (these are just a few of the phrases we use in today's world). To be brutally honest, as men very few of us are *All In* when it comes to our commitment to Jesus. Vying against our commitment to Jesus are a tremendous number of distractions and pressures that seem to pull us in every direction except the one that counts.

In this 6-week series we're going to take a real, hard look at what we need to do to **make Jesus Plan A**. Provided below are topics we'll be covering in this series. Each topic has been specifically selected to drive us towards building a life where we don't have to make any excuses in living for Jesus.

1. October 11 Finding the "Why?" in your life.
2. October 18 What's Your "game"? Discovering God's specific plan for your life.
3. October 25 Roadblocks: areas of sin and weakness that prevent success.
4. November 1 It's all about TRUST: Making the leap of faith.
5. November 8 Developing God's *Game Plan* for your life.
6. November 15 **Putting it all together and living with purpose for Jesus.**

The most important thing in your life is not what you do; it's who you become. That's what you will take into eternity. You are an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe.

Dallas Willard

This is a lesson about trees...

The Bible uses "trees" throughout to communicate important concepts. This is especially true in the New Testament where Jesus talked about bearing fruit, as did Paul. Listed below are several examples:

- Tree of Life and Tree of Knowledge (Genesis 2:9)
- Consequence for eating the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:17, 22)
- The righteous man is like: *is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season* (Psalm 1:3)
- *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who is wise wins souls.* (Proverbs 11:30)
- ***For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit...*** (Luke 6:43-45)
- *... If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit...* (John 15:5)
- Grafted-in branches (Romans 11:16-27)
- Fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22)
- Eating of the Tree of Life (Revelation 2:7)



In tonight's lesson we're going to talk about **putting it all together**. Like trees, we bear fruit when we're healthy. Unfortunately, sick trees don't bear good fruit as Jesus aptly pointed out in Luke 6. All too often we're overly-focused on "fruit production" in our life and the lives of others. While fruit is important and the primary reason trees exist, fruit is a product that results from a healthy tree. For us as Believers, fruit is good work that can ultimately results in leading others to Jesus.

I'll admit much of my life I've focused on fruit production – *doing stuff*. As I mature both in age and spiritually, the Lord is teaching me that He is far more concerned with my character than my accomplishments (even those things that are done for Him). It's a difficult balance (at least for me) between *working hard to make things happen* and *trusting the Lord to fill in the gaps*. John Quincy Adams said it best, "Duty is ours, results are God's." We still have to trust God, but it does not negate the need and requirement for hard work.

Let's talk about some important concepts related to trees.

1. The strength of a tree is based on its **roots**. For the Believer, strong roots come when we spend time with God in His Word.
2. Studies have actually shown that trees actually get stronger when loaded, or **stressed**. In *Biosphere 2*, now owned by the University of Arizona, scientists found that the absence of wind prevented trees from developing and some even collapsed from their own weight. The same is true of you and me – we'll never develop if we don't take any personal risks for the Kingdom of God. Our faith grows when we're "under load".
3. Healthy trees are able to **fight disease**. Why in a forest with thousands of trees do only a few get sick? What's worse, at some point infected sick trees start affecting surrounding trees (e.g., have you ever seen pine beetles at work?). As Believers when we are living by the Spirit, we are far less likely to succumb to temptation, frustration, and depression.
4. Trees need water, sunlight, and nutrients to grow. Absent these things they die. The same is true of you and me – we need to be in **God's Word** and experiencing **fellowship** with other Believers if we are going to grow into mature followers of Jesus.
5. The health of a tree can be ascertained by the **quality of the fruit** it produces. Healthy trees produce good fruit; unhealthy trees produce either poor quality fruit or no fruit at all. We need to consistently look at our lives and evaluate where we see God at work. If we have to look too hard or for too long, we might have some work to do!



The *ALL IN* Letter

Tonight, you're going to write yourself a letter. In some regards this is a glimpse of the conversation you and Jesus will have at the Bema where you will take an inventory of the things you've done in your life. Lord willing, you'll receive this letter in July of next year.

Here are a couple of ideas you might consider in writing your letter.

- Identify areas where you want to improve, maybe dealing with a besetting sin or an area of discipline where you are struggling. Commit this area to prayer and see what the Lord will do.
- Sharing the Gospel with someone or starting a neighborhood Bible study focused on others.
- Taking a risk for the Kingdom, something that's scary, has unknowns, and creates dependence on God.
- Living sacrificially financially – how's your giving to Lord? Are you holding back because you don't trust God to *fill in the gaps*?