

# Mission Statement

“The purpose of my ministry is to illustrate to believers that efforts to be spiritual will not prevent us from encountering sin and pain and that by owning our emotions and sinful nature we will experience grace and learn to be forgiving and loving of ourselves and others.”

## “THE PURPOSE”

Purpose is a central underlying meaning to everything that is done.

I realized that I needed a purpose one Sunday morning while singing the words from Matt Redman’s Heart of Worship, “a song in itself is not what you have required.” As I sang those words over and over, I realized that up until that moment all I had was a song. A deep desire to offer God so much more filled my heart. I knew that I would need help and direction so I prayed that God would make his specific purpose for me clear. I signed a contract with a Christian artist development company based in Oregon, Incubator Creative Group, to help me learn how to be “more than a song” and help me discover the specific message that God wanted me to present.

The journey to discover God’s specific purpose for my life has been difficult. Through the journey God has opened my eyes to my sinful nature and its effect on those around me. Because of the effort I’ve put into my ministry, audience members won’t hear a cookie cutter Christian message but one born out of the specific workings of God in my life. In turn I hope that they will be able to see God’s hand working in their lives more clearly.

## “OF MY MINISTRY”

A ministry is something, which addresses a specific need by sharing God’s love.

It took me a long time before I realized that what I was looking to do was to create a ministry. It wasn’t until one evening at a Steven Curtis Chapman concert that I began to understand. During one of the songs I turned around and gazed out over the crowd of people. As expected I saw people smiling and clapping, but upon closer examination I began to notice dozens of people on their knees in tears. God had broken through to their hearts and was ministering to their needs at that very moment and I was a witness to it. He let me see a glimpse of His power to show me what true ministry was all about. I soon became one of those people with my face covered with tears.

That night helped me begin to visualize my audience, and “see” the kinds of pain that they might be experiencing and how God might use the events in my life for their benefit. Since then I’ve found myself slowly turning away from all of my preconceived ideas of what the future would hold and just “following Him.” As I did I began to see my pride and hypocrisy more clearly and the

areas in my life that needed the ministering touch of God. As I share my message, my audience will be able to see areas of pride and hypocrisy in their own lives more clearly as well.

## “IS TO ILLUSTRATE”

To illustrate is to paint a picture and makes something that is unclear clear by example.

Jesus used illustrations all of the time to explain concepts to people. They were effective ways of bypassing people’s natural defenses and allowing them to hear the truth in a non-confrontational way. The “There was a certain man...” approach was Jesus’ way of pointing a finger, without pointing a finger. In my case the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax collector was the one Jesus used to pierce my defenses. As I read it I felt convicted of a pride that I didn’t realize I had and I began to see the areas in my life that needed God’s touch.

I hope to be “that certain man” to my audience. The illustrations I bring out will be real stories from my own life that will allow audience members to embrace the parts of their own life that need ministering.

## “TO BELIEVERS”

Believers are all those who acknowledge Jesus’ Lordship over their lives and accept His free gift of eternal life.

Although I had grown up in a home that went to church every Sunday, I never truly understood why Jesus was called Lord until my mother and father were separated when I was ten years old. It was the second time that I found myself facing the possibility of losing a father. All the feelings of pain and abandonment that I had experienced when my biological father left years earlier came back with a vengeance. It was at that time that God came into my situation and became the father I could count on. Over the years that followed the Holy Spirit has guided me, challenged me, and comforted me. He has done everything that a Father should do, and in return I began to slowly turn over every part of my life to him. Over time, he truly became my Lord.

I had always thought that I was a “believer” and therefore o.k., however simply believing in “A God” is not enough. Through my testimony my audience will be able to see the difference between simply believing in God and submitting our lives daily to His authority.

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## "THAT EFFORTS TO BE SPIRITUAL"

Efforts are things, which sometimes bring us closer to our goal, and sometimes do not.

I tried many things in an effort to get closer to God. I figured that if the church needed me to do something then it meant that God wanted me to do it too. I became a regular fixture at the church and could always be counted on to be there. I became so busy trying to serve God that I began to lose sight of Him. At one point I was so drained that I began to wonder if God was real at all. All that I could see was a long list of obligations. I felt like a hypocrite standing in front of the church singing of a God I could no longer see. I dropped out of every church activity that I could and became a regular Sunday morning "pew warmer" once again. I spent the next few months reconnecting with the God that I had left behind.

I'm sure that there are many people out there with a sincere desire to get closer to God that are doing similar things today. By openly sharing my life and experiences, I will show my audience that spirituality is not earned, but a response to a gift freely given.

## "WILL NOT PREVENT US FROM"

To prevent is to somehow keep that which would normally happen, from happening.

Pain and sin are inevitable side effects of living in a fallen world but I thought that I could prevent them by following the rules. Trying to do everything right was like always waiting for the other shoe to drop. The pressure to be perfect was overwhelming. I felt as if something horrible was going to happen at any moment as a result of my sins, so to "appease" God I attended more Bible studies, and joined more church activities. In many ways my life resembled that of the Pharisee's. It was outwardly perfect, but inwardly distant from God.

There are so many Christians out there today living this "double life." Unfortunately the very place that people should be able to turn to for help with their problems is often the place where they feel the greatest need to pretend. Through my ministry I will show people that growth in Christ can only come through honestly confessing your weaknesses and sins to God and seeking help from him and his people.

## "ENCOUNTERING SIN"

Sin is anything, which brings distance between man and God.

It was hard for me to imagine that service to the church and its people could be considered sinful. But my service wound up taking so much time that it actually distanced me from God. I became so busy working for Jesus that I didn't take the time to sit at his feet. On top of it, all of the activity began to give me a feeling of righteousness. As pride filled my heart I began to look down on those who said they couldn't give as much time as I had. I became critical and unsympathetic to those in genuine need.

Saying "No" to church service hardly seems like the "Christian" thing to do, but neither is saying "Yes" to

everything. Through sharing my experiences openly, my audience will be able to know what Jesus meant when he said that Martha's sister Mary had "chosen the better thing."

## "AND PAIN"

Pain is the hurt that we experience as a result of living in a sin filled world. Pain can be caused by people, disease, or our circumstances in general.

When I was growing up I was taught, "If I wanted to avoid experiencing pain, I needed to avoid sinning." According to that "wisdom" every bad thing in my life was a result of God's punishment. My goal in life became to keep God happy, because a happy God didn't punish his children. I wound up serving God out of a sense of fear and obligation. Even times of blessings were haunted by that fear as I dreaded eventually doing something to fall out of God's favor. It's good to fear the Lord, but I've learned that obedience should be a result of love, not the way to find it. I think many people like me are going about things the wrong way and following God's law out of obligation rather than out of gratitude.

Through sharing my life experiences, the audience will see that we can never be "good enough" to please God and that through Christ we have the right to accept the free gift of God's love. Our service to Him then becomes the natural response.

## "AND BY OWNING OUR EMOTIONS"

Emotions are the driving forces behind much of what we say and do. The spectrum includes the obvious emotions like love and hate as well as the subtler and often times hidden emotions of pride and arrogance.

My pride made me look at service to God as a spiritual barometer. The more involved I was, the more spiritual I was. The less I did the further away from God that I felt. As a result, I would condemn those who weren't as committed as I. On the surface I would say that I understood, but deep down I didn't respect their choices. It wasn't until I began to acknowledge my pride that I was able to see the true struggles of the other person. It is only now with God's constant help that I can begin to be truly sympathetic to the needs of those around me and be the friend that God is calling me to be.

Seeing through the "fault to the need" is what Jesus was able to do, and it is what we too are called to do. My audience will come to understand that without understanding their own emotions they won't be able to be truly sympathetic to those that God is calling them to minister to.

## "AND SINFUL NATURE"

Sinful nature is the natural tendency that we all share to achieve independence from God.

I thought that I had reached a point in my life where I was doing "OK." Things were going good at work and at home and I thought that it meant that God was happy with me. I wound up settling into a routine that

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increasingly left less and less time for God. Without realizing it, I slowly began to reclaim control over areas of my life that I had once given to Christ. Before I knew it my hectic schedule left me feeling like I was spinning my wheels and going nowhere. I felt tired, alone, and powerless to help myself. It was then that I realized that God was still waiting for me where I had left Him. Waiting to take control over my life again and steer me back in the right direction.

Through my life people will see that there is no such thing as settling into a stationary relationship with God. If we are not actively moving closer to Him then we inevitably begin to drift away.

## **"WE WILL EXPERIENCE GRACE"**

Grace is being given something you don't deserve by those who choose to love us in spite of our shortcomings.

The Bible says that those who have been forgiven love little. That bothered me for a long time. I was measuring my sins against everyone else's and felt that I didn't need to be forgiven for all that much. Furthermore I resented the statement that I would therefore "love little." I thought I loved a lot! The "love" that I did express towards my friends however, was very conditional. If they lived up to my standards I loved them abundantly, if they didn't I would become indignant and downright cold. It wasn't until God began to show me the depths of my own sins that I began to see others the way that God wanted me to see them.

It is natural in our society to judge everything in relative terms, but there is only one standard that matters, God's standard. To that we all come up short. God is working with me to look first at the plank in my own eye before removing the speck in my brother's. I will show my audience that we must first understand the depths of the grace that God has given to us before we can share that grace with others.

## **"AND LEARN TO BE FORGIVING"**

To be forgiving is to "forget" offenses made against you. Once forgiven, the offense no longer plays a role in the relationship.

My tendency to avoid confrontations made it look as though I forgave easily. Unfortunately, my forgiveness was usually only superficial. Over time things would build up in my mind until a thousand "forgiven and forgotten" arguments, remarks, and gestures would resurface and leave me furious and intolerant of even the slightest offence. At that point I would usually feel justified to end the relationship in any way possible leaving my friends feeling confused and abandoned.

Confrontation is so often times looked at as unchristian in the church, yet the lack of confrontation can cause so much more pain. I hope to show people how we need to learn that forgiveness must encompass the entire person and not just our lips.

## **"AND LOVING OF OURSELVES"**

To love is to express the very heart of God through forgiveness, patience, mercy, and honesty.

Realizing that God's love was a gift that I couldn't earn was one of the most liberating things that has ever happened to me. My whole life I had tried to do things right out of a fear of punishment. But then one day God brought me face to face with the pride that had grown out of always "doing things right" and I saw how far from perfect I really was. I also saw that God loved me in spite of it and I began to love myself as well. A weight was lifted as I began to rest in His grace for the first time.

To love ourselves requires that we first recognize our value in God's eyes and the sacrifices that He has made on our behalf. As I share my message, people will come to see that even though we will inevitably fall short of God's standard, He is always there ready to offer His love and forgiveness.

## **"AND OTHERS"**

Others are everyone else, from family and friends, to people we pass on the street. It is the ultimate expression of the "neighbor" spoken of in the commandments.

God said to love our neighbors as ourselves. I had always thought that I had enough love for myself and therefore for everyone else. It wasn't until God began to show me my hypocrisy and open my eyes to the depths of His love for me that I started to understand His truth. He's now teaching me to see the sin in my own life before criticizing the sin in others. As a result I'm slowly beginning to love others the way He loves me and it's wonderful!

I want to challenge my audience to look at their relationships in a new way. To understand first the depths of love that God has for them and then to share that love with those in their lives.

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