

Dear ---,

Some of you I've spoken to recently. Others, it may have been awhile. Some of you knew this email was coming. Most of you may be wondering why you are getting an email from me. No, I am not selling anything or wanting you to invest your hard earned money in the next sure bet. Lately, God has confronted me with the question of how I should be investing myself. The more days I put in on this planet, the more I'm confident He's wanting me to open up my life and get out of what has become my "normal". As I've been praying about how and in whom I might invest, He brought your name to mind.

So, what does that mean exactly?

I've long felt there was a desperate need for the intentional pursuit of Christian discipleship in the lives of leaders (church and professional). When I first began to serve in full time ministry (many YEARS ago!) I assumed discipleship would be automatic for me. Of course, what I found was that it was not only NOT automatic, but it required more intentionality on my part.

By God's grace today I am loving Him, seeking Him, and inviting and experiencing His transformation in my life more than ever. This is in large part because someone has been purposefully and intentionally challenging me to live and lead like Jesus.

Is someone investing in you in this way? Some of you may have someone in your life who does that very well. If so, then you don't necessarily need to read what follows. But for others, it's just not happening. Whatever the case, if you are open to having someone invest in you, then please, read on.

Here's the thought:

We all know Jesus' final challenge to us in Matthew 28, "Go and make disciples..."

Jesus made disciples, who then, in turn, were called to make disciples, who then made disciples, who... You get the picture. We are followers of Christ today, because of Jesus' initial investment in the twelve. Isn't that amazing?

Jesus modeled a method of discipleship based largely on imitation. He repeatedly used the word "follow" when speaking to his disciples. "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9.23) "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." (Matt 4.19) Paul, likewise, emphasized the same concept when he said, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." (1Cor 11.1)

Jesus invited the disciples into his life and challenged them to live into their identity as a child of God.

My invitation is to give myself to you as an investor in your life for this next season, for you to follow my example, **as I follow Christ's perfect example**. My mantra going forward will be, "I certainly am not a perfect example, but at least I am a living one."

So what might this look like practically?

Well, Jesus lived life with his disciples, training them by example as He went about His Father's business, as well as making time for formal instruction. You and I would have to trust that God will help us figure out exactly what an unstructured, life-on-life, informal relationship will look like going forward, but as far as a formal environment goes, here is what I propose. I'd like to meet with you twice a month in a small group setting. I'm suggesting we meet one week on a Wednesday evening from 7-8:30 somewhere near central Fort Wayne and the other week through Skype, Google Hangout or similar means - also on Wednesday from 7-8:30PM. I'll ask you to commit to a 12 month journey of opening our lives to one another - the purpose being to encourage and challenge each of us toward greater development of Christ's character and in the skills He modeled. At the end of this 12 month time frame, the call will be that you offer to invest yourself in a group of leaders (or potential leaders) in a similar venture.

This is not about doing a book study (though we will definitely be interacting with Scripture), nor about building a bigger ministry, becoming a better father, or husband. What I'm talking about is making yourself available for the Holy Spirit's ruthless transformation of your character and leadership skill, which obviously, in effect, will radically transform your ministry, marriage, and workplace, as well as, your home and family, your staff, your church, and our community.

Well, that is probably enough to chew on for now. I have no idea what your life situation or schedule looks like these days, but all I ask is that you please spend some time seeking the Holy Spirit about this before making a decision. I'm certainly not looking for an answer from you today. Pray about it and if you feel God tugging on your heart as He is on mine, say "Yes." Then we'll work out the details.

If you'd like to sit down and talk more about this at any point, don't hesitate to get in touch with me. I'd love to meet you for lunch!
I like lunch.

I'll be praying about this for both of us.

In Him,
craig