



### **A Letter to Our Partners: “Discipling a Generation”**

The Table finds itself in a season where God is producing fruit. Particularly, we have seen God bless us as we practice making disciples who make disciples of Jesus. Here’s just one story of fruit: This Spring (2021), a young man (24 years old) named Solly prayed to receive the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ. But this story actually started 6 years ago with another man who was a drug dealer in our city.

Six years ago, I bumped into a man who was known to be a drug dealer in our city. I met him outside of the school gym in downtown Thorold where we host our community dinners. When I first met him, I smiled and introduced myself, but he just stared back at me with an angry scowl on his face, said nothing, and walked away.

In the following weeks, I ran into him a few more times, and made attempts to get to know him. He slowly softened up, and we began having conversations. Over time, I learned a little about this guy. He came from a broken home, was addicted to drugs, was part of a gang in our city and had been in and out of jail much of his life. But this man was not just a drug dealer. This man, named Brian, had a story. In time, this faith community, called The Table, got to know more about Brian and shared our lives with each other.

In time, Brian became curious about Christianity and eventually received the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ. Over the last 6 years, God has worked powerfully in Brian’s life. Through the power of God’s Spirit and the support of Christian community, Brian overcame his addictions and some of his hurts, habits and hangups. Brian slowly took one step forward in faith and recovery, then took 5 steps back. But over the last 6 years, God has shaped Brian into a man of God who is free from addiction. Along that journey, I have had the opportunity to develop an amazing friendship with Brian.

Fast forward to today. This Spring, that same Brian was walking up the stairs to his apartment in downtown Thorold. On the way up, he bumped into his neighbour, a young man named Solly. Brian smiled and introduced himself. But Solly just gave a blank look and walked past. In the following weeks, Brian made attempts to get to know Solly. He invited him over for dinner, and Solly came reluctantly.

Brian got to know Solly’s story. Then took the calculated risk of offering more hospitality (even during a pandemic) and eventually shared his faith. A few weeks back, Solly prayed to receive the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ.

But there’s more to the story. Don’t miss this because it’s so important. It’s the reason I’m sharing the story. Many years ago, someone invested in me (Terence). Through the Spirit’s leading, that person taught me how to follow Jesus, how to be vulnerable, how to pray, how to open my Bible, how to love God and others. Over time, God led me to cultivate a friendship and discipleship relationship with Brian. Today God is using Brian to develop a relationship with Solly. Brian is investing in Solly, taking an interest in this young man’s life -- the same way someone taught me and took an interest in my life. This multiplication is the real juicy fruit! One day (hopefully), Solly will make disciples who make more disciples of Jesus Christ. Needless to say, it’s incredible to be part of this interconnected chain of discipleship as God builds his kingdom in our city!

Throughout this 6 year journey, I’ve learned that making disciples is really hard and yet so simple. It’s simple because it’s just submitting to God’s leading as we share our life and learnings with someone else. It’s really hard because it requires submitting to God’s leading as we share our life and learnings with someone else. It includes joys, tears, struggles, and pains. But the juice is always worth the squeeze!

By reading this story, my hope and prayer are that every able-bodied Christian would be inspired to make disciples of Jesus. Let’s face it, if we don’t accept the call to make disciples, everything we’ve ever learned about faith and life dies with us. And we’ll never get to experience the best fruit of all: becoming friends with people like Brian or Solly.

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