As far back as the 1950’s man has been intrigued with 3-D and movies. The concept has always been to take one perspective and add an element of depth to it. To do so they came up with a special devise that would record two perspectives at once. They then designed hardware, actually glasses with a film as the lens in which to view these images. These glasses allowed the viewer to see a new dimension or give an allusion of depth when watching movies. This way of viewing things was intriguing to audiences all across the country. To watch a movie and have the image seem to come out at you, added a whole new element to the experience. People soon demanded more!

Viewing a movie in 3-D as people had come to know of it, had to change. Technology was advancing and so must the way we experience film. As the 2000’s came 3-D became known as Real-D. Not only was an image given the illusion of being capable of coming out at you from the screen, now the image gave way to a multitude of layers within the picture. Beautiful pictures and unimaginable detail where now taking movies to a whole new level. With Disney Pixar movies, and the arrival of presentations like Avatar viewers have almost deemed 2-D movie experiences outdated.

It’s funny that these types of experiences have shaped the way our culture approaches things. We love 3-D! We love seeing things a different way. Statistics say that the demand for 3-D Blu Ray players were up this year. The VP of NPD sales Stephen Baker said, “Sooner, rather than later, the difference between 3D Blu-ray and Blu-ray is going to be meaningless”. (http://www.blu-ray.com/news/?id=5599) People want to see things the best way possible. There is something about getting the most from what we see and the experience it brings. At this current moment they have already created a technology that allows you to view 3-D without glasses and one of the first people to experience it will be children when the new Nintendo DS is released later this year displaying it through games.

There is this movie called “Vantage Point” that was released in 2008. In the movie Denis Quaid a secret service guard for the President of the United States is a witness and engaged with what seems to be an assassination. The movie is about 8 different people who have 8 different vantage points into what took place. Throughout the movie Denis Quaid and a few others find themselves frantically searching every vantage point presented to find the one truth to help solve the case.

I remember watching this movie and it was intense! The movie practically restarts itself 8 times as you get to view what took place through the vantage point of each 8 characters in the movie. Each vantage point offers a different piece to the puzzle, each time giving a little more insight into the story.
We like this kind of stuff don’t we? We like new dimensions? Experiences that pop out at us? Opportunities to see things differently and view pieces that we may have overlooked before? It intrigues us. Sparks our curiosity.

So what if that could happen to the Bible? What if there was a way to look at it and see new dimensions and layers like in 3-D movies? Beautiful pictures and details that would be missed in a 2-D experience? What if there was a way to look at it from a different vantage point? What if there was something more that might have been missed by the angle you first viewed it? What if the story began to make a little more sense? The pieces began to come together? The truth uncovered?

What if today I invited you to start a journey, one that would take us through a new vantage point and one that would change the way we view the Bible forever?

Growing up, I was taught the Bible. My mom did a tremendous job of teaching us the Bible and how to memorize verses in it. I remember her grabbing a tape deck and recording us as we would repeat and quote scripture she had taught us to memorize. I was the kid who could memorize things pretty fast in life. That’s a good thing and a bad thing; it’s why I don’t need many notes to teach, but also why stupid stuff comes out of my mouth, because so much content is flying around inside my head. It’s very easy for me to chase a tangent and then realize I am taking us way off track and need to save that for another time. Growing up with a Granddad and Father who were both Pastors only enabled me to hear more about the Bible. To know the stories. To quickly recall them. But... there came a point when I realized that I was just passing on what I heard. Now, first hearing that statement would make many people sit up and ask, “are you saying that it was wrong?” Not at all. What I learned growing up shaped me. It was Truth. I was being taught foundational truths that revealed God to me. Nothing in my past was wrong or can be ignored. I found God, met Jesus and have been changed forever because of it.

What I was realizing, is that as much as I could spit back out, it wasn’t real for me like I wanted it to be. It was becoming just content. I knew the answers, but it was if I was missing something. Then a flame began to burn, a desire to know more. In the summer of 2003 I flew 7,000 miles away to a place called Israel. I found myself standing in the places that I had memorized stories of. I was walking where Jesus walked and suddenly things started happening. Within those moments arose a desire to see more of the Bible than I had. I wanted to learn more than I knew. To explore and find things that I had never seen before. I was hearing things about places I had learned and finding myself to say, “I didn’t know that was happening here!”, “I didn’t realize that’s what it meant when that happened?!”

The actual play does not change. Anyone ever been out of the country? If I were to take you to Africa with me there would be some things that you would have to learn before the trip. Things about the people, the land, the food, the diseases, the language, the culture, their habits and their interests. Things that would only help your experience and understanding for the trip, not hinder it. Nobody would run into a country like that and expect everything to look, breathe, and act American. You would need to know things like the language of the people there is mainly French. Still, even if you have taken French classes there are slang words, and litful languages that the people speak. You would need to know that when you eat, the custom of their people is for the men to go into the room and seat first... then the women... and if anything is left over the kids get it. You would need to know that when you enter the presence of someone who is hosting you, that the conversation, the night, the event is not over till they are ready for it to be over. These are nuances and details that by seeing a video or looking at pictures you would not understand right away. Things about the people in their land and culture that change the situation and circumstances.

Most of you would agree with this. You can’t enter into the world of other people, another culture, without first trying to see where they are coming from. It’s called context.

But what if you could see Jesus differently? What if you could open up the Bible and understand some things that you couldn’t before? What if you could see things that you might have missed?

1. It may confirm what you already know to be true
   *it was the correct call
2. It may add to or expand what you already saw
   *a different camera angle added clarity to the call
   *saw details you missed from the first camera angle
   *gives you something more to the play
3. It may present an all together new picture
   *you thought previously that the player was out-of-bounds, but realized he was actually in
   *different camera angle shows him possibly out, but the main camera angle shows he was in all along

The Truth in the Bible doesn’t change. It’s kind of like taking a trip. Anyone ever been out of the country? If I were to take you to Africa with me there would be some things that you would have to learn before the trip. Things about the people, the land, the food, the diseases, the language, the culture, their habits and their interests. Things that would only help your experience and understanding for the trip, not hinder it. Nobody would run into a country like that and expect everything to look, breathe, and act American. You would need to know things like the language of the people there is mainly French. Still, even if you have taken French classes there are slang words, and litful languages that the people speak. You would need to know that when you eat, the custom of their people is for the men to go into the room and seat first... then the women... and if anything is left over the kids get it. You would need to know that when you enter the presence of someone who is hosting you, that the conversation, the night, the event is not over till they are ready for it to be over. These are nuances and details that by seeing a video or looking at pictures you would not understand right away. Things about the people in their land and culture that change the situation and circumstances.

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Let's put the shoe on the other foot for a moment. I was trying to take my assumptions and attach it to their story, in their culture. The Bible was trying to tell me. When Jesus said, “different, act different, eat differently than us became real. It made me see why I was not seeing all that was taking place by just jumping in it. We are NOT the big leagues. We are still understanding more. We are just here to help with what God has chosen to give and reveal to us. Today is about laying the groundwork. The foundation.

So, where do you start with the Bible? What camera angle are we talking about?

One that realizes that the Bible was written by... "Real People, Real Place, Real Time"

Contextual... Hebraic Approach.

Jesus was Jewish
(not blond, didn’t have pretty gold locks, but a personality, customs, traditions, etc.)

The Bible was written by Jewish People in a Jewish culture.

The language is Jewish / Hebrew

I should emphasize that almost the entire Bible is Highly Hebraic. Even though parts of the New Testament are communicated in Greek, the background is still rooted in Hebrew life. We tend to forget that the Old Testament comprises approximately 78% of the biblical text, and the New Testament only 22%. When we add Hebrew portions of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Acts 1-15, approximately 43% of the New Testament) to the Old Testament, the percentage of biblical material originally written in Hebrew rises to 88%. (less than 1% of the Old Testament - composed in Aramaic). Not more than 12% of the entire Bible was originally written in Greek. When we subtract that 12 percent the 176 quotations from the Old Testament, the percentage of the Bible originally composed in Hebrew rises to over 90%. (Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus/ p.4-5 / David Biven, Roy Blizzard Jr.)

This was only expanded upon in my trip to Israel. The true fact that they think different than us, talk different, act different, eat differently than us became real. It made me see why I was not seeing all that the Bible was trying to tell me. When Jesus said, “have eyes to see and ears to hear”. There was a reason I couldn’t always see. I was trying to take my assumptions and attach it to their story, in their culture.

Let’s put the shoe on the other foot for a moment.

A friend told me last week of a friend who visited from a different country. He could not believe that we have entire isles dedicated to food for animals in our markets. We would laugh and assume it’s the norm. Would wonder why they can’t understand. (Illustration: jobs, experts in the field)

"Now, does God still work. Yes. Does God still reveal himself. Yes. God always has and always will. "When you seek me, you will find me" - Jeremiah 29:11

Look back at the 4 possibilities for a moment. (rewind to the “angle 2” sports illustration)

Hear this... we are not trying to make you Jewish. But we need you to bring down walls and push aside stereotypes when you hear the word Jewish with thoughts and readings about Judaism today. **There are always the fans who argue the call even when they have seen 4 new angles that say differently. That’s stubborn. That’s pride. That’s not the heart in how to approach the Bible. The Bible was written by Eastern Minded People. Who live in a Eastern world. Who think in a Eastern mindset. We want to try out best to see their context, see how they were thinking, and what that reveals to us.

Eastern mindset is concerned with = knowledge
Western mindset is concerned with = practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A split between natural and spiritual</td>
<td>Everything is spiritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualism</td>
<td>Important to be part of a group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition is good</td>
<td>Cooperation is better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man-centered universe</td>
<td>God-centered universe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History is recording facts objectively &amp; chronologically</td>
<td>History is an attempt to preserve truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change is good = progress</td>
<td>Change is bad = destruction of tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universe evolved by chance</td>
<td>Universe created by God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material goods = measure of personal achievement</td>
<td>Material goods = measure of God’s blessing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in prophetic timetables</td>
<td>Time is the Day when God acts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truth = abstract (Why)</td>
<td>Truth = concrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers are described by systematic explanations</td>
<td>Ok with questions you can’t answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes the person out of their world to examine them</td>
<td>Engages the person in their world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stresses knowing about Him</td>
<td>Stresses knowing Him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sees God in abstract answers (Love, awesome, etc.)</td>
<td>Sees God in pictures (Eagle, Dove, Rock)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are things you must think about when you are reading the writings of these people. It’s a lens or vantage point that we must be willing to look through.

To Eastern minded people names are important. They mean things. They tell a story. It’s heritage, it’s family. We hate the genealogies in the Bible! We skip pass them, because we can’t pronounce them. We quickly move forward. But what if you realized that the names where helping tell us something? What if you realized that these Eastern-Minded authors where giving you these names to help you understand more of the story?

(Example: Sampson - comes from Hebrew root word “right” / Delilah from “darkness”)

When you say these two names to a Jewish person they immediately know that something doesn’t mix. The names help start the story. Jesus = salvation. Try reading the Bible and inserting that this week to see how they were thinking, and what that reveals to us.

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Growing up in church I heard hundreds of sermons about a passage of scripture found in Matthew 28. In this passage we find Jesus about to ascend to Heaven. Before he does so, he utters one last command to his followers...

Matthew 28 “Go make disciples”
There has been debates for years what this meant. Many of us know this as the “great commission”. The most important task for us as followers of Jesus, but I always had a question… what was a disciple really? What did it truly mean to be a disciple of Jesus? Because for most of my life people applied this command to “evangelism”. Getting someone to say a prayer at the end of a service or an event and then suddenly they were just a “disciple”. They had no clue about anything other than that they were just told they needed Jesus. That if they died today, without knowing him as Savior then they would spend eternity in hell. And although at the base of that lesson there is a truth, they were then told that a package with a bible and some stuff to read awaited them at the back so that they could go on their way to becoming a disciple and obeying this same command.

I used to think, “that’s it”? Read the stuff and that’s all? What about follow up? What about helping them understand the stuff I am having a hard time understanding? That’s what you think “disciple” means? I just don’t know if that’s all of it?

See what we have done in our culture is replaced “disciple” with “convert”. And although we desire for people to realize that there is no hope, or promised eternity unless they turn and follow Jesus, “converting” as us church people know it, is only the beginning. “Converting” to us is the easy part.

Doesn’t take much time. Doesn’t mean I have to really interact much. But the truth is that discipleship is a process. It takes time. It means involving yourselves in the lives of people. It’s not a new idea! As a matter of fact it has been going on way before Jesus, which most of us have never really thought about. Jesus was following in the customs and traditions of his culture at his time.

The Eastern minded people of the Bible would say that the first glimpse we get of discipleship is found in the forefathers of our faith. Abraham, Moses, etc.

Genesis 14:14 When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

What do you see when you first read that? Most see 318 soldiers ready for battle. “Western thinking.” They see 318 “trained” men in Abraham’s household. (house = community)

They would even go as far as to see 3-1-8 / 3+1+8 = 12

3 representing Peter, James, & John
1 representing the outcast Judas
8 the others

See all that, within one verse? Makes you realize Abraham wasn’t just preparing men for battle with swords, but for a greater battle… life.

The concept of discipleship, reproducing yourself in another had been taking place for ages. The problem is that we are still trying to wrap our brains about what it really means for us today, and are losing opportunities to begin practicing it.

We have thought about “discipleship” in a western mindset. Knowledge.

Just let me know the answer to what it is and it doesn’t work.

We must approach it today through a different vantage point. We must put on our 3-D glasses and see the onion peel back with layers and layers of depth. We must realize that the people were Eastern minded as authors and were much more concerned about you practicing “discipleship”.

This series is to get you to rethink this concept and to live differently because of it. To step back and ask questions like, “what did the “disciples” of Jesus really hear that day”? What does that mean for me? We want like the movie to almost stop, and start from a different view point, as many as possible. Remembering that the content inside hasn’t changed. The play is still the same. We just have different windows and camera angles to look in and we should be taking advantage of them as much as possible.

Key Vantage Point: Discipleship is NOT a program

It can exist within some, but it is not defined by them.

We knew as we started this church that we would be asked constantly about where our “discipleship” programs were in our church. Because for decades now the church has confined it to a program that starts and stops on a certain night a week, in a certain room. We wanted to help you rethink that. To help you find a new vantage point as to what it means to be a “disciple”.

Our covenant members packet says: [http://genesischurchorlando.com/who-we-are/FAQ/]

In some understandings, discipleship is added to the list that a church titles to implement. At Genesis Church, EVERYTHING we do is centered around discipleship. The way we learn, the way we love, the way we worship, the way we serve, our obedience to the Great Commandment, the way we live TOGETHER is how we set out to be disciples of Jesus and thus make disciples for him. Simply put, discipleship is not optional. It is the purpose of a follower of Jesus Christ!

As a member of Genesis Church, you are agreeing that you understand your sole responsibility as a follower of Jesus is to pursue your life as his disciple in living, loving, and learning. You are also agreeing to be a part of a body, who takes very seriously, the charge of our Savior: “...go and make disciples of all nations…”

*The ways found below are not programs but aspects of your walk as a disciple here at Genesis Church.

Discipleship and following Jesus are synonymous. They were not intended to be separated, yet many have. They were not intended to be programs, but a lifestyle for us to embrace and chase after.

This series is about viewing all this through a new vantage point and once we see it in a new light, realize that we are responsible for how we choose to follow it.

The play, the story has begun. The journey has started. We will rewind, come to a different window, put on our glasses, as often as possible to allow God to reveal to us the life that he originally intended for us.

This is your new vantage point.

*Resources for part 1:
Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus - David Bivens
http://www.amazon.com/Understanding-Difficult-Words-Jesus-Perspective/dp/156043550X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1296098239&sr=8-1
Follow the Rabbi - Ray Vanderlann
http://www.followtherabbi.com/8tix?appID=1458
Center for Judaic Christian Studies
http://www.jcstudies.com/ (audio / Jewish roots 101)