



making disciples
Magnification

Can you think of a time recently when you've 'sung the praises' of something or someone – whether it be something new in your house, an experience, perhaps really good service you encountered somewhere, or a friend or family member? Please share with the group.

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Welcome to your Growth Group in 2018! This 5-week series 'Making Disciples' is an important one for Christ Central because we'll be delving into 5 passions we have as a church. These have always been our passions, but we do want more clarity and a greater sense of purpose that Jesus' great commission to make disciples, really does involve us! *Our Prayer is to See a Flood of Lifelong Disciples across the North Edge of Brisbane and Beyond.* This will require our prayer, our energy, our gifts and talents, our finances, our love for others, our Christ-likeness, and also our courage. But there is no greater purpose to live for!

And this week we start with the passion of Magnification. You might be wondering why we're starting with this particular M. The reason is, that before Jesus gave his great commission (Matthew 28:16-20) He in fact first gave the great commandment. Jesus said,

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment."

Matthew 22:37-38

So let's talk about this together – what it means to magnify God in all lives.

Magnifying God

Read these passages and then discuss the questions below:

*I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul makes its boast in the LORD;
let the humble hear and be glad.
Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name... **Psalm 34:1-3***

*For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. **2 Corinthians 5:14-15***

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. **Colossians 3:16-17***

1. What does it mean to be fully devoted to God?

2. Why would we want to be fully devoted to God?

3. How does the gospel of Jesus Christ make you smaller in your sight so that God would be (rightly) bigger to you?

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Our Lives & Magnification

As we've seen, magnifying God is all of life – *do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks...* This means there shouldn't be any part of our lives that's not a heart driven expression of our love and devotion to God.

4. How does magnifying God affect... (be honest and be practical)

a) My prayer life?

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b) My work/study/retirement?

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c) My leisure time?

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Our Sunday Gathering and Magnification

5. All of life is to be lived magnifying God but as we gather together on Sundays we corporately focus our hearts on God and that experience in turn encourages us to glorify God in the rest of our lives. Reading back on Colossians 3v16, how does this passage challenge/encourage you about the way we approach our gathering on Sundays?

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Getting Clear on Magnification

At Christ Central on Sundays you generally won't hear words upfront such as 'please stand as we worship'. You're more likely to hear words like 'please stand and sing'. Why? Because while singing is a uniquely special way to express our thanks and praise, we want the whole gathering together to be about our worship and our desire to magnify Him, including as we pray and hear and respond to the teaching of his word. And at Christ Central on Sundays you generally won't hear words upfront such as 'welcome to our worship service'. You're more likely to hear 'welcome to church, or welcome to our gathering'. Why? Because we want all our life to be about worshipping and magnifying the name of Jesus (see Romans 12:1 and Colossians 3:17). But most strangely of all, there's sometimes a way of thinking about corporate worship on Sunday that goes like this – 'there's a type of real worship that brings down the presence of God'. There's certainly plenty of speakers and websites out there that talk that way. But at Christ Central we want to pursue a different type of worship on Sunday. There is no effort we can make to bring down the presence of God! It's Jesus himself who's brought us into God's presence by his sacrifice in our place. We simply want our heart's affections fixed on what He's done and what He's promised He will do. We can't do anything for God. He graciously does it all for us. But when we deeply realise this, we want to hear more of Him from His word, spend time with him in prayer, and lift our voices together to Him. At Christ Central, we don't mind how people lift their voices – whether it's in tune or not, or whether they stand still or raise their hands. Those are secondary things that are part of people's varied physical expressions. It's the central thing that really counts, that from our hearts we want to bring glory and honour to God as we magnify Him as our Saviour and King.



Magnification and Remembering

When we talk about magnifying God in all our lives, it's about something that is extreme and total. Loving God with all our heart, soul and mind is nothing less! But at the same time, we shouldn't have this false impression that deeply loving God is the super-spiritual state that only some in our church can attain. In fact the Psalms are helpful for us in this.

¹ *Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name!*

² *Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits,*

³ *who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,*

⁴ *who redeems your life from the pit, **Psalm 103:1-4***

6. Do you notice that in verse 2 it says, 'and forget not all his benefits'. That's a command to follow. And so in our weakness and sin, we need to be deliberate and intentional so that we would not forget God and all that he's done for us. In practical terms, what will be it mean to take steps to not forget God?

7. If you feel comfortable, share your own personal devotional pattern of regular prayer and bible reading with the group. If you're struggling in this way, be open to what others are doing and seek to encourage each other.

8. As a growth group, what will it mean to not just study the bible together, but also magnify the name of Jesus together? How could magnification be a feature of your growth group time? (be practical)

Prayer

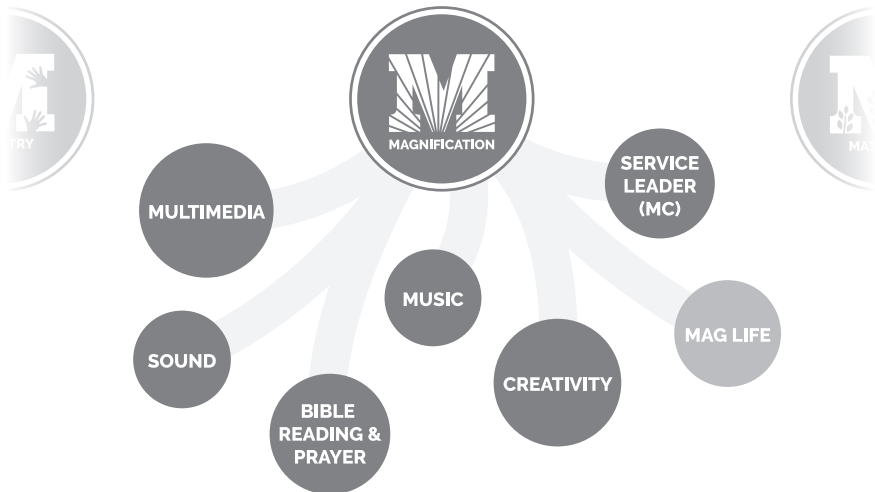
Spend time in praise to God – for his character and his saving work in Jesus. Pray for each other and for our church that we would see with our hearts what Christ has done and that we'd be drawn to glorify Him – in every area of life, and as we gather on Sundays too.

Magnification Teams

As a church we want you to be a partner in the ministry of making disciples and this will involve serving in teams. These teams will serve to champion the various 'M' passions across our church, including at a new congregation planned for later in the year. At the end of this 5 week series, we want to get people to indicate the teams they want to be involved in. In the area of Magnification, see below for the various teams we wish to grow.

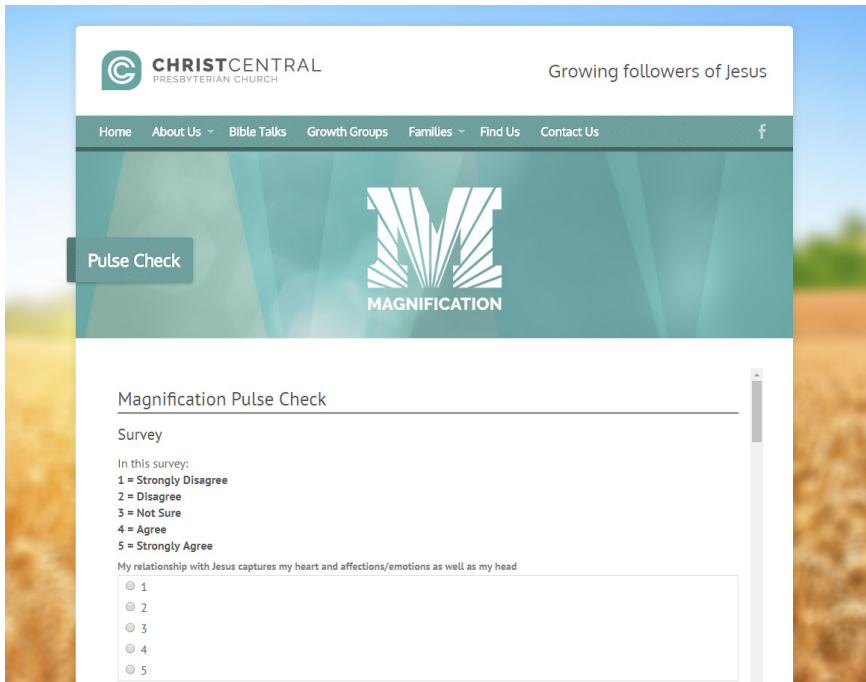
James Jensen is heading up Magnification at Christ Central. But in the meantime, if you'd like more information you can contact James,

0419 510 864 or **james@christcentral.org.au**



Magnification Pulse Check

Over these 5 weeks we're taking the opportunity to take stock and gauge how we're going at growing disciples of Jesus. Of course it's only God who brings the growth, but He uses the means of our leadership, our efforts, resources and prayer. If we're going to be more effective in making disciples we believe it will be healthy to do some honest assessment and then act on it! In fact we'd like to do this Pulse Check every year from now on at Christ Central. If you haven't yet filled out the Magnification Pulse Check, take time tonight to fill it out. You'll find it here christcentral.org.au/pulse



The screenshot shows the Christ Central Presbyterian Church website. The header includes the church logo and the tagline "Growing followers of Jesus". A navigation menu lists "Home", "About Us", "Bible Talks", "Growth Groups", "Families", "Find Us", and "Contact Us". A "Pulse Check" button is visible on the left. The main content area features a large "MAGNIFICATION" logo. Below the logo, the survey title "Magnification Pulse Check" is displayed. The survey instructions are as follows:

Survey

In this survey:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Not Sure
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree

My relationship with Jesus captures my heart and affections/emotions as well as my head

Below the text is a radio button selection interface with five options labeled 1 through 5.



Meet Vern, Wanting to Magnify God

I was born into a family with a Christian mother and non-believing father. Throughout my teens I believed I was saved because I believed in God, and went to church. When I left home at eighteen, it began to dawn on me I needed to make a commitment of my own. I sought out a church and was attending a Bible study course and discovered that being rescued requires absolutely no effort on my part, that the rescuer does everything. This was such radical teaching for me! Perhaps that was the moment that I was transferred from darkness and into God's Kingdom? Perhaps it happened earlier, or since. What I do know is that as broken and sinful as I continue to be, I am and always have been entirely at God's mercy, and that I am saved by Grace alone, through Faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. I exist solely to serve and worship Him, to bring glory to Him, and – by my words and actions – to point others to Him.