

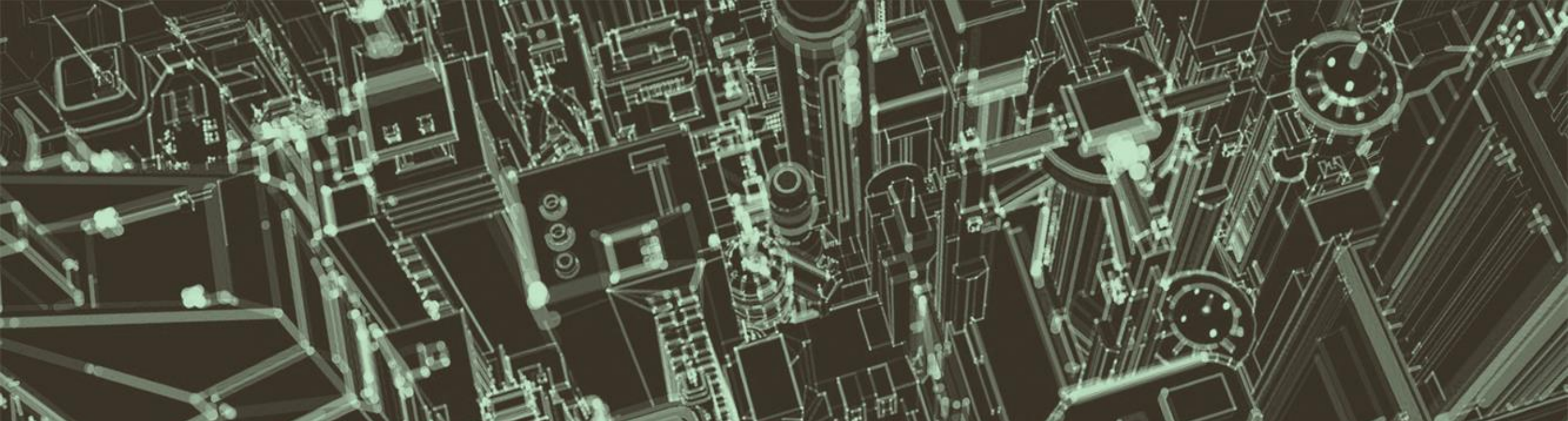
DISCIPLINES OF LIFE WITH OTHERS

CITY SESSIONS: SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES FOR LIFE



DISCIPLINES OF LIFE WITH OTHERS

- “Keeping company with Jesus is not just a private spiritual act, it is the way we share the trinitarian life of God with others. We are meant to live in community the same way God does.” – Calhoun
- We were made to share our lives with others. It is not simply something we naturally need or that we are commanded to do, but a way that we reflect the image of God.
- We will look at 3 categories for sharing life with others: fellowship, evangelism, service



DISCIPLINES OF FELLOWSHIP



DISCIPLINES OF FELLOWSHIP

- Christian community is not like a club or interest group. It exists when believers connect with each other to love one another, serve one another, encourage growth in Christ, and cooperate in bringing the gospel to the world.
- It is a diversity of people unified in Christ.
- “Above all, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. And let the peace of Christ, to which you were also called in one body, rule your hearts. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.”
Colossians 3:14-16

DISCIPLINES OF FELLOWSHIP

- The following disciplines are all practiced in order to build Christian community and grow in Christlikeness together.
- These are all disciplines because none of them happen by accident, and they are all modeled and/or taught by Jesus, the apostles, and throughout the Old Testament as well.
- These are things that you must make time for and plan for.
- What are they?

DISCIPLINES OF FELLOWSHIP

- Accountability Partners
 - “...appropriately and reciprocally disclose struggles, failures and temptations to a godly friend who is committed to asking hard questions, willing to challenge, and given to encouragement and prayer.” – Calhoun
 - James 5:16; Galatians 6:1-2; Hebrews 3:13

DISCIPLINES OF FELLOWSHIP

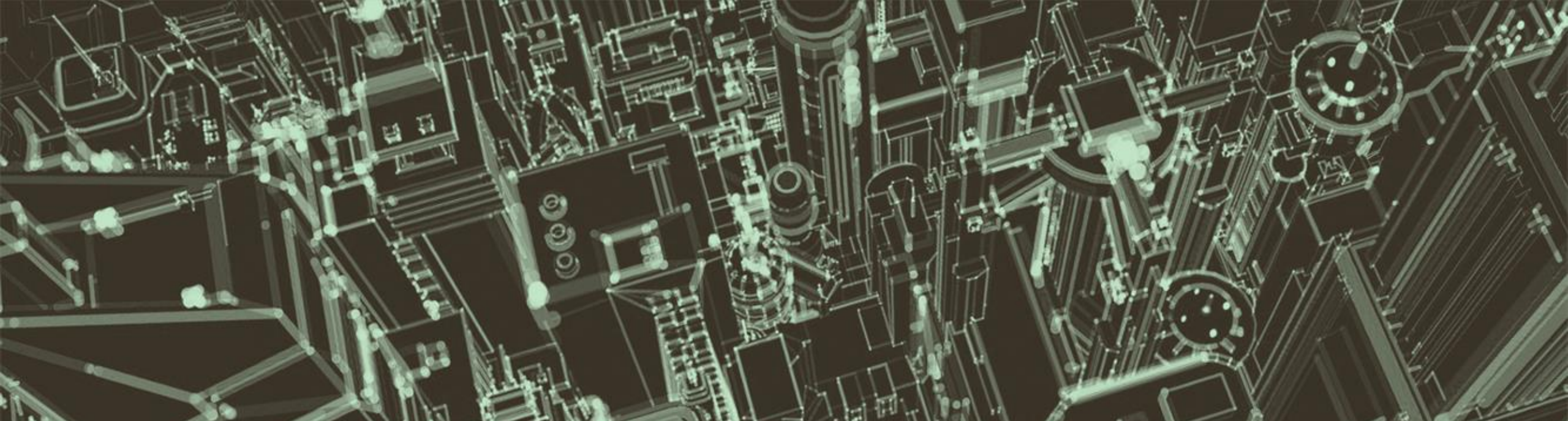
- Small Groups
 - Intentionally connecting and regularly gathering to help one another grow in loving God and doing his will.
 - Spiritual formation is not simply a solo event. God works in us through others often.
 - Small groups should create a place where Christians can give one another courage to be vulnerable and to go out and do God's will.
 - Romans 12:10; Heb. 3:13, 10:25; Psalm 133:1; Eccl. 4:12

DISCIPLINES OF FELLOWSHIP

- Hospitality
 - Creating a safe and open space where friends or strangers can come and experience Christ's welcoming spirit.
 - Worldly hospitality is mostly concerned with physical openness (perhaps even emotional), but Christian hospitality goes beyond that to spiritual openness.
 - It is "receiving each other, our strengths, our...ideas with openness and care. It means creating an ethos in which the community of truth can form." – Parker Palmer
 - Romans 15:7; Hebrews 13:1-2; John 14:1-3

DISCIPLINES OF FELLOWSHIP

- Discipling/Being Discipled
 - Equipping, training, and encouraging another in his/her apprenticeship to Jesus.
 - This is not just helping one to grow in knowledge, but also in the character and action of Christ.
 - It is often done either one-on-one or one-on-few: this is modeled by Jesus and the apostles.
 - Matt. 28:19; John 15:15; 1 Tim. 1:18; Titus 2:3-5



DISCIPLINES OF EVANGELISM



DISCIPLINES OF EVANGELISM

- The main reason many of us don't share the gospel effectively, frequently, and relatively fear-free is because we don't discipline ourselves to do it.
- Jesus expects us all to evangelize.
 - Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-47; John 20:21; Acts 1:8
- “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”
1 Peter 2:9

DISCIPLINES OF EVANGELISM

- If it is expected, why don't we do it?
 - We think we need specialized training.
 - We fear people will reject us or think we are strange.
 - We are afraid of the method we are asked to use.
 - The seriousness/urgency of evangelism scares us.
- **SHARING THE GOSPEL AT ALL *IS* SUCCESSFUL EVANGELISM!**

DISCIPLINES OF EVANGELISM

- The Holy Spirit is the power of evangelism.
 - “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8
 - The Spirit doesn’t empower us all to evangelize the same way (with the same method), but he gives us all power to witness (even when we don’t feel it).
 - There will be power in your method as it aligns with your personality, spiritual giftings, opportunities, etc.

DISCIPLINES OF EVANGELISM

- The gospel itself has power!
 - “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes...” Romans 1:16
- The way we live augments our witness!
 - “The most powerful ongoing Christian witness has always been the speaking of God’s Word by someone who is living God’s Word.” – Whitney
 - 2 Cor. 2:14-17

DISCIPLINES OF EVANGELISM

- Why is it a discipline?
 - We cannot just wait for it to happen to us or it may never happen. More often than not, evangelism doesn't happen by accident.
 - Scripture shows us that it is active, not passive: Matt. 28:19, 5:16; Col. 4:5-6
- This all means that it doesn't matter how often we are around unbelievers, but how often we are placing ourselves with them in an appropriate context for sharing the gospel.

DISCIPLINES OF EVANGELISM

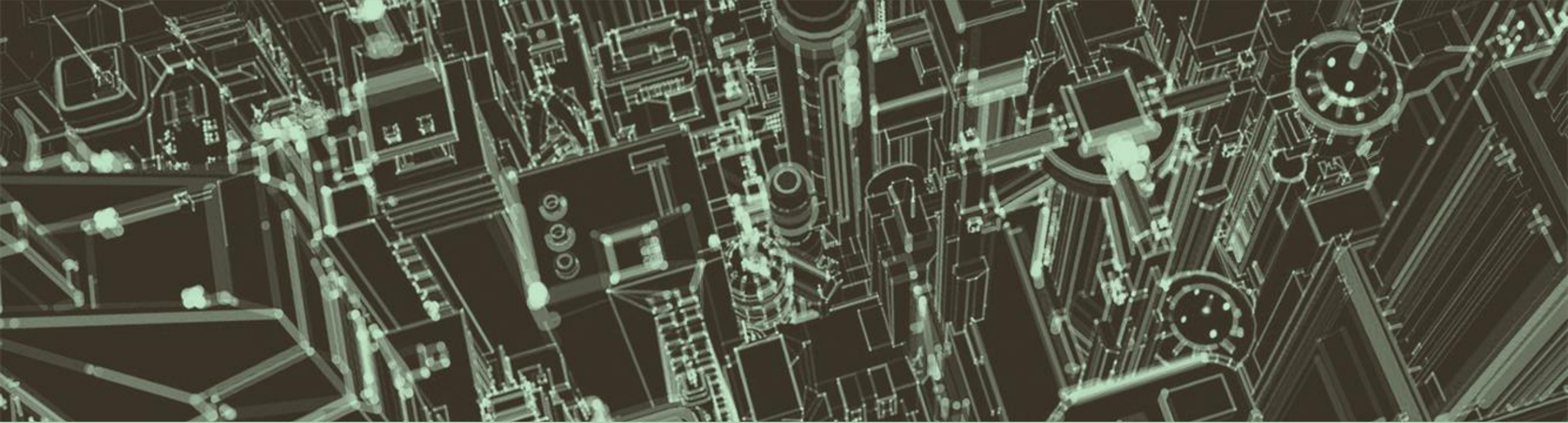
- “In whatever context the Lord places us to live our lives, He calls us to find ways to fulfill the Great Commission there, however limiting the context may be.” – Whitney
- So, we must discipline ourselves to be with unbelievers.
 - Think back to our missional living habits.

DISCIPLINES OF EVANGELISM

- “Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God. If anyone speaks, let it be as one who speaks God’s words; if anyone serves, let it be from the strength God provides, so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything....” 1 Peter 4:10-11
- Peter points to 2 broad categories of evangelistic gifting: serving and speaking.
- Servers and speakers should work together to create environments where the gospel can be share.
- This doesn’t mean servers never speak and speakers never serve!!

DISCIPLINES OF EVANGELISM

- Servers must serve to open the door to sharing the gospel themselves. Speakers must serve more to open the door to using their gift of sharing the gospel.
- We must remember to live out the gospel!
 - But! “The *example* of Christianity saves no one; rather it is the *message* of Christianity...that ‘is the power of God for salvation.’”
– Whitney
- As we discipline ourselves to share the gospel with those around us, we must also discipline ourselves to supporting those sharing the gospel around the world (prayer, giving, going, etc.).



DISCIPLINES OF SERVICE



DISCIPLINES OF SERVICE

- “Serving God is not for the casually interested. It’s costly service. God asks for your life. He requires that service to Him become a priority, not a pastime.” – Whitney
- “Serving typically looks as unspectacular as the practical needs it seeks to meet.” – Whitney
- This is why we must discipline ourselves to serve.
 - If we don’t, we will only “serve” when it’s convenient or self-serving.

DISCIPLINES OF SERVICE

- “Like our worship and evangelism, so also our service should flow from within...as a result of the life-transforming presence and work of the Holy Spirit. But because the Spirit of Jesus within us causes us to yearn to be more like Jesus, and also because of the persistent gravitational tendencies toward selfishness in our hearts, we must also discipline ourselves to serve.” – Whitney
- “how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works so that we can serve the living God?” Hebrews 9:14

DISCIPLINES OF SERVICE

- We serve motivated by...
 - Obedience: Duet. 13:4
 - Gratitude: 1 Sam. 12:24
 - Gladness: Psalm 100:2
 - Forgiveness (not guilt!): Isaiah 6:6-8
 - Humility: John 13:12-16; Phil. 2:3
 - Love: Gal. 5:13; 2 Cor. 5:15; Mark 12:28-31

DISCIPLINES OF SERVICE

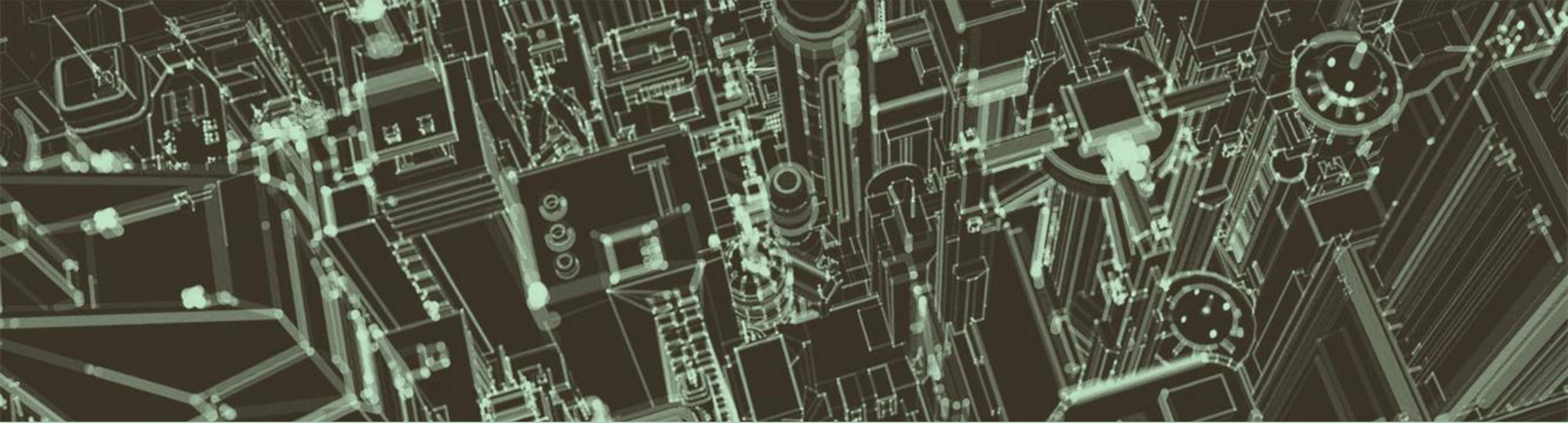
- The Holy Spirit gifts each of us with spiritual gifts.
 - 1 Cor. 12:4,11
- In addition, Peter tells us that our gift is given for us to serve one another.
 - 1 Peter 4:10
- So, if you are a Christian, (1) you definitely have at least one spiritual gift, and (2) God gave you that gift for you to serve with it for his kingdom.

DISCIPLINES OF SERVICE

- Figure out your spiritual giftings: take a spiritual gifts assessment, talk to others to confirm it, contemplate on your natural gifts.
- Then, discipline yourself to serve regularly in a ministry aligning with your giftings in church.
 - “Find a way to defeat the temptation to serve only when it’s convenient or exciting.” – Whitney
- We discipline ourselves to serve for the purpose of becoming more like Jesus who came “not to be served but to serve” (Mark 10:45).

DISCIPLINES OF SERVICE

- Don't think that service will always be easy or effortless. Sometimes it will feel like "toil".
 - Col. 1:29
- But! "Disciplined service is also the most enduring kind of work. Unlike some things we may do, service to God is never valueless."
– Whitney
 - 1 Cor. 15:58; Heb. 6:10
- "Disciplined service to God is work – hard and costly labor sometimes – but it will endure for all eternity." – Whitney
- Has the gospel given you a servant's heart? Is your service rooted in the gospel?



QUESTIONS?

