



Disciples in the Marketplace

Episode Four: Better Stories of Grace in this Place Quick Look Discussion Guide

Check out the *Disciples in the Marketplace* [landing page](#) to view the **streaming video interview** with brew master, Nate Underwood. You will also find additional backstory/bonus clips, as well as links to a [full transcript of this video](#) and bonus clips. See group discussion questions for this episode about seeing grace at work below.

“... God shows up anywhere, whether it’s a church parking lot, or the back of the building, in a brewery, in the church and the coffee shop.

God shows up everywhere.”

-Nate Underwood

God nears. Grace works. And Disciples see grace at work, responding as witnesses to God’s “with-ness” for life. In this episode, we focus on good work that creates a life-giving culture wherever God is near and here to help – especially those places where stories of trauma and love testify to the grace that is already repairing the world.

Grace Has a Place

In the category of ‘I guess this must be the place,’ take a few minutes to reflect on and/or discuss one or two of the questions below.

Opening Group Reflection/Discussion Questions:

- **Describe your hometown or a place that you have come to know as “home.”** What do you love (or dislike) about this place? Did you leave or stay? Why? What’s your hometown known for (or what does almost everyone nearby know about this place)? What are things you can only know if you’ve lived there awhile? What’s one of the best kept secrets about this place?
- **Think of a famous (or infamous) place with a memory or story or attached to it in popular consciousness.** With food, for example (New York/Chicago Pizza, Kansas City barbecue, Nashville hot chicken, Philly sandwiches). Or places like Rome, Paris, London, or Honolulu, with either the weight of history or myths of escape and romance. Or even places that seem identified with tragedy or conflict (Chernobyl, Columbine, Aokigahara [Japan], Waco [Texas]). What place holds a memory for you?
- **What makes your workplace distinct/unique?** How is it like many or most other places you have worked (location, commute, tasks, tools, environments, customers, suppliers, etc.)? What would it mean for your work if you knew how God was already doing something there in the lives of your co-workers and customers (something John Wesley calls ‘prevenient’ grace)?

Video Discussion Questions: What Did You See?

Cut to the chase: Watch [Episode Four: Better Stories of Grace in this Place](#). See the video discussion questions below. See, too, the **Bonus/Backstory clip links on this web page** with ‘origin stories’ that create customer conversation starters for Nate and his team.

Choose one or two of the questions below as you consider what it means to be a disciple in the marketplace:

- **What did you hear/see in Nate Underwood’s story?** What will you remember?
- Do you see grace at work in Nate’s attempt to create community and a culture that is locally sourced and more life giving? Where? How?
- Nate notes **the devastating effects of the beer culture he witnessed in college** (a culture that “did not bring life to its community”). **Have you witnessed something similar?** What are some of the perils of making something good that is subject to misuse and abuse? (for example, pharmaceuticals that can heal/help, or social media that both connects and spreads disinformation/cruelty).
- Nate says his work starts in the soil. **Have you** or someone you know **ever had a job with a close connection to the soil** or the local landscape? What lessons can we learn from distinct landscapes/topographies?
- If “the health of the soil is the health of the community and the people on it,” in what ways do the marketplace businesses in your community care for and conserve (or exploit and spoil) your landscape?
- **Do you shop local?** Nate says, “buying local is one of the best ways that you can love your neighbor.” What are some of the challenges to buying ‘local’ (cost, box store chains, online retail vendors named after large rivers)? **What are the benefits?** Share examples.

Another option for reflection/discussion:

Listen to one of the ‘place’ songs from the unofficial Disciples in the Marketplace-SATP crowdsourced Spotify playlist (“My Hometown,” “Walking in Memphis,” “El Paso,” “New York, New York,” “Kansas City,” “Deep in the Heart of Texas,” “Take Me Home, Country Roads,” “Chicago,” “Sweet Home Alabama,” “Havana,” “Allentown,” etc.). Play the whole song together and ask the group to listen for the song’s take on the shape of life in that place (its beauties, promise, troubles, difficulties). Then ask yourself and the group:

- What’s the song about? *Where* is it about? Does this rhyme or resonate with your own experience of some place you have called home. How so?
- Would you say this song reveals something true everywhere or distinct to the flavor of the particular place/city it references?
- Do you have your own favorite ‘place song’ (“Kansas City,” “San Jose,” “New York City,” “T for Texas”) or tunes that remind you of home? Sing a few bars if you feel confident. Invite others to sing along if they know the chorus.



Nate Underwood Quotes from the Better Stories of Grace in this Place video

“If you were to tell my college self that I would be helping run brewery, I would have probably laughed in your face. Going to school, **I saw a culture of a beer that did not bring life to its community.** Craft beer, **craft brewing is an alternative to a lot of the beer culture that we see around us.** Just like any nice meal, any piece of art, we sit there and we can savor it.”

“**The health of the soil is the health of the community and people on it.** That means we need to be very conscious about where we get our ingredients to source our beer. By doing so, we get a product, we get a beer that has a sense of place.”

“In this big wide universe-cosmos-creation that God has left a unique individual fingerprint, that each place is a little bit different [and] **we get to experience that uniqueness that God created through our taste, through our smell, and through our senses.**”

“For us, **buying local is one of the best ways that you can love your neighbor.**”

Our goal is to show life to them when they come into our business... **They can listen to a story** that we believe [that] will make their life and their day a little bit better.”

“We may not know how these stories will affect people, but **we're going to keep on telling them anyway, because they're stories that have brought us life.** And they are stories that have taught us. And I hope someday I get to witness the blessing of some kind of harvest of the seeds we're planting as a brewery.”

Bonus/Backstory Video Discussion Questions: Better Stories of Grace in this Place

Check out additional Nate Underwood clips where he tells the spiritual back-story behind some of the lagers and ales produced at Harding House Brewing Company – and how these stories inform conversations about grace with customers.

Stories Behind the Beer – 01 Beloved (01:03)

Bonus/Backstory Questions

- The name of this ale (Beloved) is based on a prayer: “May I learn to see those around me as neighbors, and may the word ‘neighbor’ come to mean ‘beloved.’ Have you ever read a phrase on a product that communicated something deeper about life? **How might people react to this when reading the side of the can?**
- Who do you know who would never darken the door of a church? **Are any of your co-workers or clients people for whom church is a ‘no fly zone’?** What would it mean to them if they actually believed the prayer above (and that the people in your church believed that about them, too)?

Stories Behind the Beer – 02 Church Parking Lot (01:36)

Bonus/Backstory Questions

- **Do you have any ‘church parking lot’ stories?** For example, Nate says he had his first kiss in a church parking lot.
- **What are other places where you think many might feel close but also on the outside looking in?** This experience of being near but on the margins of religious life prompts many to seek out other gathering places where they will be accepted. **What does that mean for those who think discipleship is life together where all are welcome?** How might that impact our own sense of calling near (but beyond) traditional church spaces?

#SEETHEPEOPLE

- Nate reminds us that “God shows up everywhere.” **List three unlikely places** in your community’s ‘marketplace’ **where people might meet God and share grace.**

Stories Behind the Beer – 03 Open Table Hibiscus (00:28)

Bonus/Backstory Questions:

- Nate says, “The whole idea is that we wanted to maintain an open table, even an open bar, and that all are welcome and that we can break down those walls together and create that community, create that fellowship that we’re doing here at the brewery.” **Where have you seen “all are welcome” spaces in your own hometown or city?** Does a church in your community have that reputation? If not, why?
- Does your working life create opportunities to welcome people from diverse backgrounds and experiences? **How is our witness at work likely to engage people of no particular religious persuasion (the ‘unaffiliated’)?** How is God already using your witness to grace in zones where ‘the unaffiliated’ do business? Share examples from your own working life.

Stories Behind the Beer – 04 Proleptic (01:30)

Bonus/Backstory Questions

- Nate says, “our tagline for this beer called Proleptic is ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a green tomato: here, but not yet.’ You can see it, you can taste it, you can smell and hold it but it’s not yet in its full glory. It’s not that big, red, juicy tomato.”¹ **What are some of the ways you experience the ‘now’ and ‘not yet’ of grace in your daily life?** In your working life?
- For many, job satisfaction is elusive, and our working lives feel like they will never ripen into a career that makes for a good ‘look at my accomplishments’ obituary. **What would you tell someone just learning to see grace at work in the small moments about the now/not-yet of life in Jesus?**

Stories Behind the Beer – 05 VIII Day IPA (01:05)

Bonus/Backstory Questions:

- Nate says, “Every craft brewery in the country has to brew an IPA. The story of “eighth day,” you know, God created the world in six days and on the seventh day he rested, but **what’s going on with that eighth day?** God never really stopped creating after the Genesis story. And that eighth day is Easter. It’s that day of resurrection.” Do you think of God’s work as a continuing creation of something new or a one-time thing in the first few chapters of Genesis? **How do we talk about creation/creativity in the church?** In our online lives (the work of so-called ‘creatives’)? What does 2 Corinthians 5:17 say about this? If this was true at your job this week, what might others see/hear in you?
- Episode One talks about one ‘nutshell’ version of the gospel: **‘God is faithful with you to make all things new’** (Revelation 21:5). What would it mean for you to experience ‘eighth day, all-things-new’ grace in your life this week? At work? At home? At church? **How might God be calling you to see/share grace and the promise of new creation at work in all these places?**

¹ See the transcript. “The style of beer is [from] a green tomato farmhouse. And, yes, I say ‘green tomato’ and I know that sounds crazy and weird and a little bit, you know, disgusting, but I promise you it’s really a delicious beer. And it’s a thing out in the country, in the South, where they used to make a thing called tomato wine. It’s sounds crazy, but I thought maybe we could pull some of that acidity notes and some of the fruity notes from the green tomato to replicate, like, a white wine, a green grape...For me, as a gardener, when you see that first green tomato it’s amazing. All this time, all this work that you’ve done – the thing is that you still can’t fully yet enjoy that tomato.”