

# Engagement Project - Tour 5 Articles

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## The Engagement Project

### Tour 5-Part 2: The Royal Vision - Engaging with Grace

Del Tackett's "Engagement Project" is a transformative series designed to equip Christians for meaningful cultural and relational engagement, rooted in biblical truth. Tour 5, titled "The Royal Vision," focuses on the call to love our neighbors as an extension of God's kingdom work. Divided into parts, it provides both vision and practical steps. Part 1 offered foundational principles, while Part 2 dives deeper into application, emphasizing prayer, relational cultivation, and grace-infused interactions. This article recaps Part 1 briefly before elaborating on Part 2, highlighting how believers can embody this vision in everyday life.

#### Recap of Part 1: Catching the Vision to Engage with Grace

Part 1 sets the stage by recapping the overarching vision: to engage our neighbors with grace as a core expression of loving them. Tackett stresses that God has entrusted the primary kingdom work not to celebrities or leaders, but to "common folk" like us. He illustrates this with the biblical story of Ananias, an ordinary believer on Straight Street in Damascus, whom God used to restore Saul of Tarsus (later Paul). This underscores that divine assignments often happen in mundane settings.

Drawing from Acts 17:23-28, Tackett posits that just as God determines the times and boundaries of nations, He strategically places individuals—including us and our neighbors—for purposeful encounters. We live where we do because specific people, like the hypothetical "Mrs. Smith" across the street, are there, and vice versa. This providential placement calls us to intentionality.

The vision statement crystallizes this: "We will build real relationships with those providentially in our Jerusalem through prayer and action, with grace and wisdom and truth, being attractively winsome, tearing down walls, building up trust, doing the work of the Kingdom." Jesus exemplifies this by focusing on deep relationships with a small group—His 12 disciples, narrowed further to three (Peter, James, and John). Tackett explains that significant relationships aren't shallow; they involve depth, friendship, ongoing communication, shared meals (noting the spiritual significance of breaking bread), collaborative projects, sacrifice, and trust.

To achieve this, relationships must be cultivated like a farmer tends virgin land. Early farmers faced grueling tasks: cutting trees, removing rocks, plowing, tilling, fertilizing, weeding—and removing more rocks. It demands effort and sacrifice. Tackett critiques "drive-by Christianity"—superficial interactions that yield no fruit—warning that for many neighbors, their only genuine encounter with a Christian might be with us. This recap primes us for Part 2's practical "how-to," urging a shift from theory to action.

## Elaborating Part 2: Practical Steps to Engage with Grace

Part 2 picks up seamlessly, addressing the crucial question: "How do we make that happen?" It continues the farming metaphor but shifts to real-life stories and scriptural anchors to guide implementation. A standout example is Joy's testimony. Living in a neighborhood surrounded by apartment complexes, Joy and her team committed to praying for 52 weeks—over a full year—for their community. This persistent prayer opened unexpected doors. They approached apartment management to offer women's Bible studies, only to be invited to lead afterschool programs and skill-development sessions for men and women. Joy attributes these breakthroughs to prayer, emphasizing the need for wisdom to neither rush ahead of God nor lag behind. This story illustrates the power of sustained intercession, envisioning a future where children pray for neighbors and witness God's reality, reinforcing that "God is really real."

Building on this, Tackett outlines actionable steps: pray for opportunities, learn neighbors' names, plan kind deeds, practice hospitality, and foster fun together. Hospitality is key—opening homes for shared meals, movie nights, game nights, or casual gatherings. These activities build relationships through prayer and responsive action, always infused with grace, wisdom, and truth. The goal is authentic bonds that reflect kingdom values.

To ground this practically, Tackett introduces three pivotal Scripture passages that recur throughout the tours:

1. **Colossians 4:5-6**: "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person." This calls for strategic, gracious communication tailored to individuals.
2. **1 Peter 3:15**: "But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence." Here, apologetics meets humility—defending faith not aggressively, but with respect.
3. **2 Timothy 2:24-26**: "The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will." This passage stresses non-confrontational correction, relying on God's transformative power.

These verses overflow with grace: making a defense with gentleness, instructing opponents gently, correcting with patience and kindness. Tackett emphasizes that engagement isn't about winning arguments but facilitating encounters with truth through relational warmth.

What makes us "attractively winsome"? Tackett points to the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Intriguingly, he posits these aren't primarily for personal benefit but to equip us for others—making us "winsomely handsome" to fulfill the Royal Law (James 2:8) of loving our neighbor. This reorients spiritual growth outward.

Personal stories bring these concepts alive. Tonya's account of overcoming fear by delivering breakfast tacos to neighbors shows how small acts of kindness initiate connections. Tackett also addresses cultural tendencies toward "doom and gloom," contrasting it with the Holy Spirit's role in making us a people of hope. He poses a convicting question: "When was the last time someone asked you for the reason for the hope that is in you?" (echoing 1 Peter 3:15). In a pessimistic world, our radiant hope can spark curiosity.

To tear down walls and build trust, Tackett shares Phil's experience with a "crusty" neighbor. Inspired by C.S. Lewis's advice to "pretend" love until it becomes genuine, Phil persisted, forging a deep friendship. This demonstrates that intentional actions can transform barriers into bridges.

Part 2 culminates with an encouraging story of a woman facing "dagger eyes" from a hostile neighbor. Through persistent prayer, God softened hearts, leading to reconciliation. Tackett assures that God will answer our prayers similarly, empowering us for this royal vision.

In summary, Tour 5, Part 2, transforms abstract vision into tangible practice. By prioritizing prayer, hospitality, gracious Scriptures, the Fruit of the Spirit, and hope-filled stories, believers are equipped to engage neighbors authentically. This isn't quick-fix evangelism but relational farming—effortful, sacrificial, and ultimately fruitful. In a divided world, such grace-filled engagement advances God's kingdom, one neighbor at a time.

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# The Engagement Project

## Tour 5, Part 2: The Royal Vision - Engaging with Grace

In Del Tackett's "Engagement Project," Tour 5 explores "The Royal Vision," emphasizing how believers can engage their neighbors with grace. Recapping Part 1 - The foundational vision: catching the call to love our neighbors practically. God entrusts kingdom work to ordinary people, as seen in Ananias's role with Saul of Tarsus. Drawing from Acts 17:23-28, Tackett suggests God places us near specific neighbors—like "Mrs. Smith" across the street—for divine purposes. The vision statement commits to building real relationships in our "Jerusalem" through prayer, action, grace, wisdom, and truth, while being attractively winsome, tearing down walls, and fostering trust. Jesus modeled this by investing deeply in a small group of disciples, showing that significant relationships require depth—friendship, communication, shared meals, projects, sacrifice, and trust. Cultivating these is like farming virgin land: effortful, involving clearing obstacles and consistent work, rejecting "drive-by Christianity."

Part 2 builds on this, delving into practical implementation. It continues with Joy's inspiring story of praying 52 weeks for her neighborhood, leading to opportunities in apartment complexes for Bible studies, afterschool programs, and skill development. Prayer is central—seeking wisdom to align with God's timing. Believers are urged to pray for opportunities, learn names, plan kind deeds, practice hospitality, and enjoy fun activities like movie or game nights to build bonds with grace, wisdom, and truth.

Three key Scriptures guide this: Colossians 4:5-6 (wise conduct, gracious speech); 1 Peter 3:15 (gentle defense of hope); and 2 Timothy 2:24-26 (kind, patient correction). These emphasize grace in engagement—defending faith gently, instructing opponents with patience.

Tackett highlights the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)—love, joy, peace, etc.—as tools to make believers "winsomely handsome," equipping them for the Royal Law of loving others. Stories like Tonya's breakfast tacos overcoming fear, and Phil's pretended love turning into genuine friendship with a "crusty" neighbor, illustrate tearing down walls. Tackett challenges the "doom and gloom" mindset, urging a hope-filled demeanor that prompts questions about our faith. He closes with a story of prayer transforming "dagger eyes" hostility into connection, affirming God's faithfulness in answering prayers for neighborly engagement.

This part inspires committed, grace-filled action, transforming neighborhoods through relational kingdom work.

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