

Discipleship

Memory Verse: Matthew 28:18-20 *“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

Week # 1 - Reading:

What is a disciple: In order for someone to make a disciple, they have to understand what a disciple is. The Greek word found in the New Testament for “disciple” is Mathetes (Μαθητής). In its original form this word refers to a student, pupil, apprentice and learner. A disciple is also a “follower,” someone who adheres completely to the teachings of another, making those teachings the rule of his life and conduct.

Applied to Christianity, a disciple is someone who learns from Jesus, to live like Him. Someone who, because of God’s awakening grace, conforms his or her words and ways to the words and ways of Jesusⁱ. A true disciple of Christ is one who believes His doctrine, rests on His sacrifice, has His spirit, and imitates His example.

Historically - A man was known as a disciple when he bound himself to another in order to acquire that persons practical and theoretical knowledge. Throughout the New Testament there were various levels of interest in and commitment to Jesus on the part of those who followed Him around the countryside and were identified as His disciples. In the book of John term ‘disciple’ is used both positively and negatively. First, it refers to those who are uncommitted, unbelieving followers of Jesus, motivated mainly by curiosity or impure desires (John 6:60 and John 6:66). Later in the book of John the term disciple is used to describe the masses who had come to faith and trusted in Jesus as their Messiah (John 8:30-31). In the book of Acts, the word ‘disciple’ is used synonymously with the term ‘believer’ (Acts 6:1,2,7)ⁱⁱ. The most frequent use of the word disciple was of the twelve disciples mentioned throughout the Synoptic Gospels - Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Not much has changed since the time of Christ, today there are varying levels of interest and commitment by those who would call themselves disciplesⁱⁱⁱ. Below are three ways these varying levels of interest can be broken down.

1. The curious - Some people physically followed Jesus in order to listen to His teaching. They were called disciples only in the sense that they were learners, interested in what He had to say and what He did. Today many enjoy listening to His teaching and probably think that He had many good things to say. Perhaps you could say that they are, at the least, entertained and, at the most, seriously consider His views and claims. But they are not convinced about who Jesus is and certainly not committed to obeying His teaching and trusting Him with their lives. They are simply curious^{iv}.

2. The convinced - Some learners had become convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ, sent from God. They believed in Him as Savior but never became mature disciples. Today some believe in Him as Savior but are not committed to following Him as dedicated disciples. They are simply convinced believers.^v

3. The committed - Some learners were not only convinced about the Person of Christ, but they were also committed to Him. They had decided not only to follow Him physically for a while but to give their lives to Him in order to follow Him completely. Today such disciples learn from Him and obey what they learn. They do His will, obey His commandments, and trust Him to guide them and provide for them. They are truly committed.^{vi}

The Great Commission: After the crucifixion, Jesus was buried in a tomb and three days later rose again from the grave. On the day that He rose, He appeared to the eleven disciples and gave what is known as the Great Commission - which is found in Matthew 28:18-20 *“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

Originally the Great Commission was given to the eleven apostles, but then it was passed on to the one hundred twenty (Acts 1:15), then to the five hundred (1 Corinthians 15:6), then to the three thousand (Acts 2:41), and many more. It has been passed from one generation to the next and now it has reached our generation^{vii}.

The Lord of the church has made clear what He wants the church to do. Not to make disciples, for whatever reason, is plain disobedience to the Master. In answering the question, “Why make disciples?” we simply say, “Because God said so. Period.” That is true. God told His disciples to go and make disciples. That should be enough reason for His disciples then and now to make disciples. It is the commission of the church. If the church is not making disciples, it is not fulfilling His commission. To ignore or neglect this commission results in the church no longer fulfilling its reason for existence.^{viii}

The Authority: The first thing that should draw our attention as it relates to the command to discipleship - is the authority in which the command was given. Before the Lord states the Great Commission, He establishes His divine authority to command it. It is because of His sovereign power that His followers are to have the attitude of complete, humble submission to His will. The word “authority” refers to the freedom and right to speak and act as one pleases. In relation to God, that freedom and right are absolute and unlimited. The all is both reinforced by the phrase “in heaven and earth”. The sovereign authority given to Jesus by His heavenly Father is absolute and universal.^{ix}

During His earthly ministry, Jesus demonstrated His authority over disease and sickness (Matt. 4:23; 9:35), over demons (4:24; 8:32; 12:22), over sin (9:6), and over death (Mark 5:41–42; John 11:43–44). Except for the forgiveness of sins, Jesus even exhibited the authority to delegate such powers to certain of His followers (Matt. 10:1; Luke 10:9, 17). He has authority to bring all men before the tribunal of God and to condemn them to eternal death or bring them to eternal life (John 5:27–29; 17:2). He had the authority to lay down His own life and to take it up again (John 10:18). He has the sovereign authority to rule both heaven and earth and to subjugate Satan and his demons to eternal torment in the lake of fire (Rev 19:20; 20:10).^x

When Jesus states - *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me”*. This statement echoes Daniel 7:14, *“To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him,”*. The importance of this comes from the fact that Daniel 7:13-14 is talking about the future messiah. Jesus has spoken several times, using the language of Dan 7:13–14, of the future sovereignty of the Son of Man (Matthew 16:28; 19:28; 24:30–31; 25:31–34; 26:64); three of those passages have indicated that that sovereignty would be achieved in the near future, to be seen by those then alive (Matthew 16:28; 24:30–34; 26:64). But now what has been a vision for the future has become a present reality. The risen Jesus, vindicated over those who tried to destroy him, is now established as the universal sovereign, and his realm embraces not only the whole earth which was to be the dominion of the “one like a son of man” in Daniel’s vision but heaven as well.^{xi} It is this authority that Jesus uses to issue a command to His followers.

The Imperative: The central command and main imperative of this passage is “Make Disciples” (Mathēteuō). The specific requirements Jesus gives for making disciples involve three participles: going (rendered here as go), baptizing, and teaching.^{xii} In the Greek language whichever word is the imperative verb, that is the word that tells us what to do. Whichever words are the participles tell us how we are to do it. The divine strategy that God has arranged to make disciples is explained through the three participles mentioned in this passage^{xiii}.

Go: The first requirement is that believers must go. The word “go” does not leave any room for complacency. All believers are called to actively move from one place or point to another. There is no casualness in the Christian life, all believers are to be constantly praying, seeking and longing for opportunities to tell others about the hope that is within them.

The commands to “go” is followed by the Greek phrase (panta ta ethnē), “all the nations,”. There should be little doubt as to what this phrase means because it has already appeared three times in the book of Matthew (24:9, 14; 25:32). In each case it denotes the area of the disciples’ future activity, the scope of the proclamation of the good news of the kingdom of God^{xiv}. This phrase does not mean every believer is called to leave their homeland and become foreign missionaries to proclaim the gospel. However, it does mean that every believer is to be on mission to duplicate themselves wherever the Lord may call them^{xv}.

Baptize: The term “make disciples” commands a kind of evangelism that does not stop after someone makes a profession of faith^{xvi}. The second requirement for making disciples is that of baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

To baptize literally means to immerse in water, and certain forms of baptism had long been practiced by various Jewish groups as a symbol of spiritual cleansing. The baptism of John the Baptist symbolized repentance and turning to God (Matt. 3:6). As instituted by Christ, however, baptism became an outward act of identification with Him through faith, a visible, public testimony that one belonged to Him. The initial act of obedience to Christ after salvation is to submit to baptism as a testimony to union with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection. “Do you not know,” Paul asked the Roman believers, *“that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life”* (Rom. 6:3–4).^{xvii} Although the act of baptism has absolutely no saving benefit or power, it is commanded by Christ of His followers^{xviii}. As believers in Christ our duty is to be obedient to this command.

Teach: The third element of the Great Commission is found in the word “Teach”. Teaching obedience to all of Jesus’ commands forms the heart of disciple making. If non-Christians are not hearing the gospel and not being challenged to put their faith in Christ, then the church has disobeyed one part of Jesus’ commission. If new converts are not faithfully and lovingly nurtured in the whole counsel of God’s revelation, then the church has disobeyed the other part^{xix}.

Key implications for preaching and teaching appear in this portion of the passage. There must be a balance between evangelistic proclamation and relevant exposition of all parts of God’s Word, including the more difficult material best reserved for the mature (1 Cor 2:1-5 with 2:6-10). So, too, the ministries of the church overall must reflect a healthy balance of “out-reach” and “in-reach.” Individuals who have differing gifts should be encouraged to expend most of their energies developing their strengths, whether evangelizing or nurturing, speaking or serving. Nevertheless, Jesus calls all Christians to be both witnesses and disciple-makers.^{xx}

The fact that we are called to teach, implies that we are to have a knowledgeable understanding of the scriptures so that we can faithfully pass along that information to others. One of the greatest disservices that a teacher can do - is to provide inaccurate or false information that then gets applied to the hearer’s life and the lives of others that the hearer may know. Teaching is not a lax commitment; it is a significant responsibility that we should take seriously. (James 3:1). It is the responsibility of the church to pass on the commands of Christ to the next generation of disciples so they can make it their way of life.

Conclusion^{xxi}:

- *The Authority* - All authority has been given to the Lord Jesus Christ, who stands before and behind those who are to carry out this strategy on His behalf. All the resources of the universe are at His disposal.
- *The Recipients* - The Great Commission is given to all disciples. Now it is your responsibility to make disciples, so that they make disciples, who will make disciples, who will make disciples.
- *The Imperative* - The Great Commission is a command, not an option. It is the command of the Lord! It is: make disciples....
- *The Essence* - The essence of the Great Commission is clear and simple: make disciples. As disciples make disciples, those disciples will also be equipped and commissioned to make disciples. Multiplication is the genius of the Great Commission. This is Jesus’ strategy for building His church.
- *The Scope* - Disciples are to preach the gospel and be witnesses of Jesus, starting from their hometown and moving out to nearby but different peoples—even the despised—and to the ends of the world.
- *The Method* - Jesus gave His disciples not only the command but also the method for carrying out the command. Disciples today are to carry out the same three steps: go, baptize, and teach them to observe all Jesus commanded.
- *The Promise* - Jesus promised His presence and enabling power, through His Spirit, to enable disciples to make disciples.

Week # 1 – Discussion Questions:

1. What is the central command found in Matthew 28:18-20?
2. How would you define the term disciple and disciple-maker? What do you believe the difference is between discipleship and evangelism?
3. Read Matthew 28:18-20 - What is the significance of Jesus stating His authority before giving the Great Commission? According to Matthew 28:20 - What confidence can we have as we go out and make disciples?
4. What is your current commitment to discipleship (Both being a disciple and making disciples)? What areas related to discipleship could you use some help in?

5. Read Romans 10:14-17 and then rate the importance of a messenger.

The messenger is essential

The messenger is very important

The messenger is optional

The messenger is unnecessary.



6. Do you believe that most Christians are reluctant to share their faith? Why or why not? How hesitant are you to share your faith with others? What are some of the things that keep you from sharing your faith?

7. Read James 3:1, Hebrews 13:17 & Ezekiel 3:17-19 - Why is it important to take the responsibility of teaching God's word seriously? Do you believe you take it seriously – why or why not?

8. For those of you who have experienced the benefit of being in a discipleship relationship. What were some of the things that were the most impactful to you and why? What were some of the challenges? What encouragement would you give to someone who has not entered into a discipleship relationship?

Week # 2 – Reading

The cost of discipleship: Salvation is a free gift, yet there is a cost to following Christ. The more a person desires and commits themselves to being a disciple of Christ, the more likely they will have to forego the pleasantries of this world and endure some of the potential hardships that go along with proclaiming the Gospel.

Those who regularly proclaim the Gospel to those who despise it will face a fierce opposition from the enemy of our souls. It is a battle ground and the soldier who pushes towards the front lines of battle is the one who will take the most enemy fire. So, it is - with the life of a disciple. Not only should they expect to face opposition and endure hardships – they should prepare for it. It is this understanding that Jesus wants His followers to have and as a result He mentions several criteria for being a disciple.

-- *Must be willing to suffer persecution and ridicule:* The gospel is foolishness to those who are perishing (1 Corinthians 1:18). The unbelieving world does not understand the importance of the message Christ came to preach. Jesus was ridiculed from the beginning of His ministry to the end of His ministry. That type of ridicule is the exact same thing a believer can expect if they are being an active witness for Christ. John 15:20 states *“Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also”*. For those of us who choose to teach what Jesus taught and live like Jesus lived – we should expect the same type of treatment that He received.^{xxii}

-- *Must be willing to forsake earthly ties:* There are many “hard sayings” by Christ to His curious and convinced followers. One of them is found in Luke 14:26 - *“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.”*

The Lord’s teaching that it is necessary to hate one’s family is not inconsistent with the Bible’s commands that children are to honor their parents (Ex. 20:12), husbands love their wives (Eph. 5:25), wives love their husbands (Titus 2:4), and parents love their children (Titus 2:4; cf. Eph. 6:4). Hate in this context is a Semitic way of expressing preference. For example, God said in Malachi 1:2–3, *“I have loved Jacob; but I have hated Esau”* (cf. Rom. 9:13). The point is not that God had animosity toward Esau, but rather that He preferred Jacob by giving His promise through him. Similarly, when Genesis 29:31 records that Leah was unloved (the Hebrew word literally means “hated”) by Jacob, it does not mean that he despised and detested her, but that he loved Rachel more (cf. Deut. 21:15–17).^{xxiii}

To hate one’s family is to prefer God over them by disregarding what they desire if that conflicts with what God requires; it is to love God more and them less. “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me,” Jesus said, “and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me” (Matt. 10:37). All other loves must be subordinate to loving God with all one’s heart, soul, mind, and strength (Luke 10:27).^{xxiv} When a choice must be made between earthly bonds and Jesus, the person who wants to be His disciple must always choose Christ.

-- *Must be willing to forsake earthly things:* Another one of Jesus' "hard sayings" is found in Luke 14:33 "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions." A person who would be Christ's disciple must give up all his own possessions. The phrase "none of you" includes everyone and the word "all" encompasses not just money, but material goods as well. There are no exceptions or exemptions to these absolute, unqualified requirements. Apotassō (give up) literally means, "to take leave of" (Acts 18:18, 21; 2 Cor. 2:13), or "to say good-bye to" (Mark 6:46; Luke 9:61). It was his unwillingness to surrender his possessions that caused the rich young ruler to turn away from Christ (Luke 18:18–23) and be eternally lost. Jesus is not advocating socialism, or getting rid of everything and living a life of poverty. His point is that those who would be His disciples must recognize that they are stewards of everything and owners of nothing. If the Lord asked them to give up all they would be willing, because loving obedience is their highest duty and joy^{xxv}.

-- *Must be willing to lay down his life in following Jesus:* Not only is there the potential that believers may have to forsake material things, there is also the possibility that believers may end up forsaking their very own lives. Matthew 16:24-26 "Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."

For a disciple of Christ to "take up his cross" is for him to be willing to start on a death march. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to be willing, in His service, to suffer indignities, pain, and even death. Each person's cross is distinctive. The extent of suffering and persecution varies from believer to believer, from time to time, and from place to place. Not all the apostles were martyred, but all of them were willing to be martyred. Not every disciple is called on to be martyred, but every disciple is commanded to be willing to be martyred.^{xxvi}

In Roman Palestine crucifixion was a form of execution reserved for slaves and political rebels. It was not only the cruelest form of execution in use, but it also carried the stigma of social disgrace when applied to a free person. To have a member of the family crucified was the ultimate shame. Crucifixion was an inescapably public fate, and drew universal scorn and mockery. That public disgrace, as well as physical suffering, began not when the condemned man was fixed to the cross, but with the equally public procession through the streets in which the victim had to carry the heavy cross-piece of his own, among the insults of the crowd.^{xxvii} To take up one's cross is simply to be willing to pay any price for Christ. It is the willingness to endure shame, embarrassment, reproach, rejection, persecution, and even martyrdom for His sake.^{xxviii}

-- *Must be willing to continue in His Word:* One of the duties of every believer is indicated in the exhortation of Jesus found in John 8:31 – "So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, if you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine." The Greek word in this passage for "continue" (Μεῖνῆτε) - signifies a settled determination to live in the word of Christ and by it. It entails a perpetual listening to, reflection upon, holding fast and carrying out the word of God's bidding.^{xxix}

Those whose faith is the real, those who are truly (actually, in reality) disciples of Jesus Christ will continue (remain, abide) in both faith and obedience to His word. The present tense of the verb eimi (are) suggests that Jesus was not telling them the requirements for becoming a disciple; He did not say, "If you continue in My word you will become My genuine disciples." Instead, He declared that the nature of true discipleship consists of continued obedience to His Word.^{xxx}

The marks of discipleship: The relationship that Jesus offered to people then—and which He offers to us today—is a discipleship connection, one in which we learn from Him as we are “yoked” to Him. The relationship is the key to learning from Jesus, to being His disciple^{xxxvi}.

-- Being a disciple of Jesus is a unique relationship. Jesus, the holy and infinite Lord of the universe, calls you to a relationship with Himself.^{xxxvii}

-- Being a disciple of Jesus means being a follower of Jesus, not of someone else. Others may help you, but He is your primary teacher, your authority and your model.^{xxxviii}

-- Being a disciple of Jesus is the most important relationship of your life. You need to know nothing more than that Jesus is God and your Savior to understand that no other relationship is more important. Only He can love, guide, provide, nurture, and give peace and hope that makes your life abundant and fulfilled. What other reason can there be for you to treat this relationship as the greatest privilege you can have.^{xxxix}

-- Being a disciple of Jesus means that everything in life revolves around Jesus. He is the center. Being a disciple begins and ends with Jesus (who He was and is) and then builds on His life and teachings (what He did and what He taught). It is not a casual, part-time relationship. It entails implicit submission and trust in every aspect of your relationship with Him. This does not mean a disciple can never fail nor disappoint the Master. It refers to the fundamental commitment to be a disciple and grow into a maturity that is consistently obedient.^{xl}

-- Being a disciple of Jesus should affect all other relationships. This connection with Him is more important than your work and ministry and everything else. This unique connection defines who you are. Before everything else, you need to see yourself as His disciple. This will then affect how you are as husband or wife, parent or child, friend, colleague, neighbor, or church member.^{xli}

-- Being a disciple of Jesus is a way of thinking and living. You are His disciple in the midst of your life—your church, family, work, and everything else that makes up your life. Being His follower is not something that you add on to your life. It is a worldview, an attitude, a way of thinking, a style of life.^{xlii}

-- Being a disciple of Jesus is a learning relationship. As you walk with Jesus, He teaches you many things, such as trusting Him to supply your needs, words to say or not to say, and things to do or not to do. In the big and little issues of your life, it is learning how to live by doing as well as knowing, applying as well as understanding, and practicing as well as studying.^{xliii}

-- Being a disciple means enhancing your relationship with Jesus through the practice of spiritual disciplines. Spiritual disciplines include fasting, solitude, and silence, along with prayer, Bible reading, and meditation. It is not, however, the disciplines which should be in the forefront of your thinking, but rather the connection with Jesus that the disciplines help to build and deepen.^{xliiii}

-- Being a disciple means you are a doer of God’s word and not just a hearer. (James 1:22). Everyone who is a true disciple will conform their life to the truth found in scripture. Obviously, it will not be a perfect conformity but their will be progress nonetheless. We become doers of the word because the word is resident within us. Disciples are to “receive” the Word of God by “being” believers who do what that Word requires.^{xliiii}

Additional Marks of Discipleship:

- Being a disciple means you are rooted in sound doctrine. (John 8:31)
- Being a disciple means you love other believers (John 13:35)
- Being a disciple means you fellowship with other believers. (Acts 2:42)
- Being a disciple means that you abide in Christ. (John 15:4)
- Being a disciple means that you are connected to the vine. (John 15:5)
- Being a disciple means that you will bear fruit in your life. (John 15:8)
- Being a disciple means you live a life of self-denial and sacrifice. (Luke 9:23)
- Being a disciple means you are willing to give everything you have to God. (Luke 14:33)
- Being a disciple means you persevere in your faith. (1 John 2:19)

Growing as a disciple:^{xii} The process of personal growth as a disciple can be broken down into three areas in which content, relationships and experiences will fit. The goal of this breakdown is to ensure a whole person development as we grow into mature reproducing disciples.

Colossians 1:9-10 “For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the **knowledge of His will** in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord**, to please Him in all respects, **bearing fruit in every good work** and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Know [Head] “...to be filled with the knowledge of his will” – We hear the gospel preached, taught and declared in worship. In this area, we grow in knowledge of what God says about Himself, His people, and His plan of salvation. Collectively we learn the gospel as we learn what it means, through corporate worship, preaching, and teaching; in addition, we pursue small group and individual study and worship to grow in our understanding.

- Orthodoxy (right belief and thinking)
- Intellectual (biblical, theological, educational, etc.)
- Believe the gospel of Jesus Christ and be able to articulate the plan of salvation.
- Know the books of the Bible and the major themes throughout each book.
- Able to explain and understand core Christian doctrines.
- Able to conduct an inductive Bible study on their own.
- Know where to find good resources to answer difficult theological questions.

Be [Heart] “...to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord” – Having heard and believed the gospel, we are formed to the likeness of Christ at a level of our identity and affections by the Holy Spirit. The gospel penetrates not only our mind, but our instinctive understanding of who we are. The result is a holy change in us; our passions and convictions are redeemed. The church as a whole is collectively renewed after the image of Christ.

- Orthopathy (right passions for God and His kingdom)
- Spiritual (growth/sanctification, spiritual formation, practices, etc.)
- Apply the gospel to life, knows his areas of struggle.
- Increase in his desire for obedience to God’s laws.
- Engage in a spiritual friendship with at least one person for confession, repentance and prayer,
- Reflect more and more the fruits of the Spirit in all his relationships.

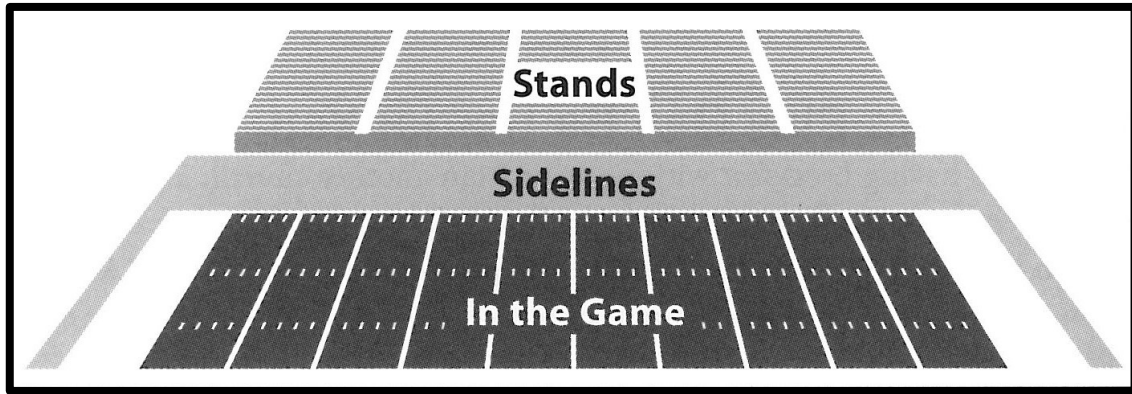
Do [Hands] “...**bearing fruit in every good work**” – Having understood the gospel, and experiencing the internal change in our passions and priorities, we then apply it in our lives practically. Our actions are empowered by the Spirit and refocused on kingdom-building. As the body of Christ our efforts in discipleship do not remain static. We are mission minded - we use our time, talents, and treasure to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and bring God glory in everything we do.

- Orthopraxy (right actions and behaviors)
- Practical (experiences, practicum, etc.)
- Knows their spiritual gifts and is using them for God’s glory.
- Is growing in financial generosity.
- Engages in serving the body of Christ through a local church or ministry.
- Practice hospitality in their relationships with one another and their community

Week # 2 - Discussion Questions:

1. In Luke 14:25-33 – We are told to “pick up our cross and follow Christ”. What do you think it means (and looks like) to “pick up our cross”?
2. According to Matthew 24:3-14 and Matthew 10:16-25 - What is the potential cost of following Christ? Have you had to pay any “costs” for following Christ – Please explain.
3. In Luke 9:57-62 - Jesus spoke to some of the people who “were going along with Him” about the cost of being His disciple. Why do you think Jesus responded the way he did to their statements? What point was Jesus trying to make with His responses?
4. Is there anything that you are currently unwilling to give up in order to be more a more dedicated follower of Christ? If so – What is it and why are you unwilling to give it up?
5. John 15:5 – tells us that we must be “abide in the vine” to bear fruit for the kingdom of God. Using scripture to support your answer - What kind of evidence would show that a person is “abiding” in the vine, what kind of evidence would show that they are not?

6. There are different vantage points from which to experience any game. Sadly, many Christians believe that the Christian life can be played from the stands. They never get on the field. In other words, they don't have a place of ministry and they don't share Christ with anyone. Instead, they watch their pastors and ministers play, as they are the paid professional players. Put an "X" where you think you have been most of the last year as a Christian who makes disciples. Have you been on the stands, on the sidelines, or in the game?^{xlii}



Stands

Sidelines

Game

7. Paul calls the Corinthian church to "imitate" him in the following passages - 1 Corinthians 4:9-16. What are some of the things Paul is calling them to imitate?

8. Rate yourself on each of the following categories from 1 to 5 on the following scale: 1 - very low; 2 - some, but not much; 3 - moderately so; 4 - good, but can improve; 5 - no improvement needed^{xliii}.

Church Attendance
 Giving
 Worship Participation
 Personal Holiness/Christ-likeness
 Prayer Life
 Personal Bible Study
 Desire for Spiritual Growth
 Teaching Others
 Good Reputation
 Salt & Light in the World

Attitudes
 Behavior
 Love for God
 Love for Neighbor
 Goodness
 Self-Control
 Patience
 Humility/Gentleness of Spirit
 Mercy/Forgiveness
 Serving Others

Week # 3 – Reading

Reproduction: The first recorded command that Jesus gave to His disciples was a command to reproduce - Matthew 4:19 *“And He said to them, follow me and I will make you fishers of men.”* It is worth mentioning that the last recorded command that Jesus gave to His disciples was also a call to reproduce - Matthew 28:18-20.

Unfortunately, many Christians will never take these commands seriously and reproduce themselves into the life of another. The result is that they take their faith and legacy with them to the grave. Nearly four thousand churches close every year in North America. It is also estimated that 70% to 80% of all evangelical churches in the US have either stopped growing or are in decline. What does this mean? Simple: the “church” (Body of Christ) in North America is not reproducing and that the church has grown lukewarm in its approach to the Gospel.^{xliv}

Reproducing is critical and the ultimate goal of discipleship is to reproduce more disciples. Reproduction ensures that a movement will live past its founding stages. The church was never intended to be an end in itself; rather it is called to reproduce and fulfill the Great Commission to make disciples. Reproduction is the goal of every living thing. We see this throughout the pages of the Bible. The Bible is full of reproductive language. God created humankind, animals, and plants to reproduce. Reproducing disciples is the result of selecting, training, and empowering leaders who will in turn reproduce themselves in others.^{xlv}

How to choose a person to Disciple: Inviting someone into a disciple making relationship is a big deal. It’s always been that way. Jesus did not choose everyone He met to be His disciples. He took seriously the selection of the men He trained. He prayed all night before selecting the Twelve (Luke 6:12-16) just like the disciples prayed before deciding Mathias would replace Judas (Acts 1:24-26). Selection is important and those who aren’t careful will learn the hard way that it’s easier to invite someone to come along than it is to ask them to go away^{xlvi}.

All too often, disciple makers select for the wrong reasons. Some seek to minimize the risk of rejection and choose a believer they know will say yes. Others want to make sure they’ll be needed, so they choose a spiritual orphan who has made a mess of his life. And still others, seek to guarantee they’ll know enough to help so they choose a much younger or less wise person. In each case the reasoning is understandable, but worldly wisdom often leads to spiritual frustration. What should a disciple maker consider before selecting someone to disciple?^{xlvii}

To answer that question, disciple makers have primarily the acronym F.A.T. to assess who is ready to be discipled: (F.A.T. = Faithful, Available, Teachable)

Faithfulness is a measure of trustworthiness: Luke 16:10 helps us understand its importance. *“He who is faithful in a very little thing is also faithful in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.”* Faithfulness then, is an indicator of whether a person can be trusted to steward something properly. Do you want to know how a person will respond to the opportunity of being discipled? Observe how that person is handling his current growth opportunities (corporate worship/teaching, small groups, training opportunities, etc.) as that’s the best indicator of how he’ll handle discipleship. Those who are faithful with what they already have are probably ready for more.^{xlviii}

Availability is a measure of priorities: In a culture where the #1 obstacle of disciple making is busyness a person’s availability can’t be ignored. As you talk with those you’re considering, which ones are loudly (& perhaps proudly) proclaiming their busyness? A person who can barely find time to meet with you for their own benefit, is unlikely to find time to disciple someone else. Since we all make time for what’s most important to us, this is actually a priority issue.^{xlix}

Teachability is a measure of both humility and hunger: Let’s face it, some people aren’t interested in growing or learning. They just don’t have the hunger to grow. Others have the hunger to grow, but distrust everyone who isn’t their favorite Christian celebrity. As you spend time around your potential picks, do they seem hungry to learn? Are they eager to learn from you? It’s important not to confuse teachability with a willingness to jettison their beliefs for yours. The Bereans were praised by Paul because they didn’t simply trust what he taught, instead they checked it against Scripture. Teachability is a genuine desire to learn and grow, but it’s also a commitment to wrestle with different viewpoints in order to become like Him.ⁱ

There are other factors that go into choosing who you are going to spend your time discipling.ⁱⁱ

CHOOSING DISCIPLES	
In relation to Jesus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desires to be His disciple • Has a heart for God: Seen in both speech and life • Committed to Christ, His mission, His people
In relation to you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willing and desires to be disciplined by you • Willing to be accountable to you • Willing to pass on to others what is received from you
In relation to the disciple and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willing to learn: teachable, reads the Bible and asks questions, wants to learn more about being a disciple • Humble: does not “know it all” • Faithful in performing tasks, in keeping commitments • Desires and able to develop good relationships with people • Available and willing to make time to • Is not interested in status, personality, appearance, or talent

Spiritual Awareness: When trying to determine who is a prime candidate to disciple, we must take into account where each person is at in regards to their spiritual awareness. Each person you encounter will have their own unique set of circumstances and their own system of beliefs. Some of these people may understand the basics of the Christian faith and others may have no understanding of the Christian faith.

How you proceed with each person is going to depend on that individual's spiritual awareness. There will be two options (discipleship or evangelism). One is not the other and both are not the same. They are two different activates directed to two different groups of people. Discipleship can only be done to believers because only believers are true disciples of Christ. Evangelism is telling people about God's grace. Discipleship is helping them walk in God's grace. Individuals, ministries and churches can, and should be doing both.^{lii}

Below is a chart that can be useful to determine where a person is at as it relates to their spiritual awareness. This will help you determine whether or not you should spend your time evangelizing or discipling. Note: This order may vary slightly between denominations....

SPIRITUAL AWARENESS CHART

E V A N G E L I S M	I. CULTIVATING	-12	Going his or her own way
		-11	Aware of the messenger
		-10	Positive attitude toward messenger
		-9	Aware of difference in messenger
	II. SOWING	-8	Aware of Bible's relevance
		-7	Positive attitude toward the Bible
		-6	Aware of basics of Gospel
		-5	Grasp of implication of Gospel
	III. HARVESTING	-4	Positive attitude toward Gospel
		-3	Recognizes personal need
-2		DECISION TO ACT	
		-1	Repentance & faith
NEW CREATION			
D I S C I P L E S H I P	IV. GROWING	+1	Faith confirmation & grounding
		+2	Incorporation into a caring community
		+3	Growing & maturing into Christlikeness
		+4	Going! Mobilization to reproduce

Four Stages of Discipleship: If the person is a true believer than it is no longer an issue of evangelism instead the focus is put on discipleship. There are four stages of discipleship that a person can fall into. (Infant 1 Corinthians 3:1-3), (Child - 1 Corinthians 4:14-17), (Young adult - I John 2:12-13), and (Parent - 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

Stage 1: Every new Christian starts out as a spiritual infant. As new believers, they are excited and eager to learn. Their unsaved friends often notice the difference, and infants are quick to announce their new faith to whoever will listen. However, in many ways, they tend to make messes. They are oblivious to what this new world is all about. They characterized by the word ignorance. They may have learned a few things, but they are ignorant of the rules in their new spiritual life.^{liii}

Stage 2: As they grow, spiritual infants move into the spiritual child stage of development. At this point, they understand the basic language of faith. They can be excited about their faith, and in many ways, they are innocent and cute. However, they still act childishly and are often rebellious and self-centered in many ways. Spiritual children tend to do what they should only when they are rewarded or threatened with some kind of punishment. They may do the right thing, but it's usually to avoid an outcome they dislike or to get something they want.^{liv}

Stage 3: As spiritual children grow up, they mature into the spiritual young adult stage. At this stage, they have grown tremendously from where they started. They are eager to serve, think independently, and look much like adults; however, they still have much to learn about responsibility and about how to care for the spiritual needs of others. They are zealous for God and can be characterized as being "God-focused" and "other-centered." They are becoming intentional or strategic about sharing their faith and will see people converted, but they are not yet able to reproduce disciples who can make disciples. They serve intentionally but don't make disciples intentionally. They want their independence, and in some cases, they should have it, but they need continued coaching/parenting.^{lv}

Stage 4: In the final stage of spiritual development, we become spiritually mature enough to reproduce disciples – we become spiritual parents. We are purposely using the term parent here rather than the word adult. As Christians, we are called to make disciples – to do our part to reproduce our faith in another. Adults are able to reproduce, but that does not mean they are reproducing. I know many Christians who have the ability to be spiritual parents but don't make it a priority. Though they would like to call themselves mature, I would say that they are not. Why? Because they have not prioritized their lives around the mission of Christ, which is to make disciples.^{lvi}



The assessment above is not a way of designating one believer as more valuable than another. It's very important that disciple-makers and disciples understand the difference between value and usefulness. While a mature Christian is more useful to the purpose of the Lord than a spiritual infant or child, he is not more valuable. Determining someone's level of spiritual development is done purely for the sake of knowing where how and where to lead them in their journey as a disciple.^{lvii}

Defining the Disciples Relationship:^{lviii} The discipleship relationship is a connection over time between a mentor and a disciple for the purpose of teaching a way of life and producing spiritual growth. The relationship is voluntary, structured, and disciplined. The truth is taught by the mentor and learned by the disciple both theoretically (acquiring knowledge) and practically (putting the knowledge into practice) as a way of life. The discipleship relationship requires the following commitments:

- Time: Discipleship is a process of growth and development which occurs over time. It involves spending time together with the person you are discipling. Some of the activities that you should be doing in a discipleship relationship are - study, prayer, service, having fun, and doing the normal things of life.

- Purpose: Discipleship is the purpose of the relationship. It is not a casual friendship. It is intentional: to bring about change in the disciple's life, both in thinking and in behavior. When the disciple is able to reproduce the way of life of the disciple maker (or some aspect of it), the goal has been achieved.

- Way of Life: A way of life is taught and modeled. It is not primarily the teaching of knowledge or information; it is the transfer of the way of life of a mature disciple of Jesus.

- Spiritual Growth: Both disciple maker and disciple are imperfect but growing toward maturity. The disciple grows in the ability to reproduce himself or herself in the lives of others, especially through evangelism and discipleship.

- Voluntary: The discipleship relationship is voluntary on both sides. Both agree to begin the relationship and either one can choose to end the relationship.

-- Structure: The discipleship relationship must have some kind of structure, whether between two people or in a small group. The disciple maker leads; the disciple follows. Goals are set and achieved. Plans are made and carried out. Schedules are coordinated, and time is devoted.

- Discipline: As in other teacher-learner relationships, there needs to be discipline. The mentor has the freedom and responsibility to exercise discipline in order to facilitate learning and doing what the disciple has committed to. The disciple also needs self-discipline to train the body, mind, and spirit.

- Truth: Truth (or content), both theoretical and practical, is communicated through the relationship. The mentor communicates truth about life to the disciple through his or her life, words, and teaching from the Bible. The goal is that the disciple will know and live out truths, such as how to live, what is right and good, and how to discern good and evil.

- Teaching: The disciple maker is a teacher, who intentionally teaches truth and a way of life to the disciple.

- Learning: The disciple intentionally learns truth. Only when the truth has been applied to life has the disciple really learned

Week # 3 – Discussion Questions:

1. Reflect on your life as a disciple. For each exercise, place an “X” above the description that best describes you right now. ^{lix}

“Follow me” – Am I someone who follows Jesus?

No one tells me what to do.	I follow, but am easily distracted like a puppy chasing a ball.	I have good days and bad days, but I try to follow.	I am sold out and committed to following every moment of every day.
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“And I will make you” – Is Jesus changing me?

I am no different than I always was.	I take three steps forward and two steps backward.	I can definitely list areas of my life that Jesus has changed.	It is becoming a habit for me to lay down my agenda and let Him change it to His.
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“Fishers of men” – At what level is my commitment to the mission of Jesus?

I don’t give up time or resources to the mission of Jesus.	I know I should, but I haven’t wanted to step up.	I try, but I have been confused at times as to what part I play.	I am sold out and using my time and resources regularly to make disciples.
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2. The last letter the Apostle Paul wrote before he was martyred - was a letter to his disciple Timothy. What is the command in 2 Timothy 2:2? What does it mean to “entrust”? How would you define the word “Faithful”?
3. Read Timothy 2:3-4 – Why do you think Paul followed his command from verse 2 with the exhortation found in verse 3 and 4? Would you consider yourself a committed soldier?

4. According to 1 Corinthians 3:6-8? What role does man play in a person's spiritual growth? What role does God play in a person's spiritual growth? Why is this important to remember when you disciple another person?

5. What are some of the obstacles that are keeping you from engaging with another person in a discipleship relationship? Are you willing to commit to overcoming these obstacles in order to invest your life into another?

6. If you do not already have a person who you are discipling, how and where could you go about finding one? What are some ways you could start laying the ground work with someone you want to disciple? Who are three specific people that you would like to disciple?

7. According to the reading - What are some of the qualities you should look for when choosing a person to disciple? Can you think of any additional qualities not mentioned in the reading?

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