

DISCIPLESHIP: IT'S NOT JUST A METHOD, IT'S A LIFESTYLE

SESSION 2

Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

LAST SESSION REVIEW

Observations:

- Majority of churches have no intentional discipleship model or system
- Most new converts are not disciplined and trained how to disciple others (great commission).
- Lack of commitment among younger generation of Christians and nostalgia of older generations.
- Lack of accountability for members of the body.
- Elitist mentality that only a few are qualified to "go and make disciples."

Disciple—*a disciple is "a student of Christ who accepts His teachings and aligns his/her life with Christ by imitating Him,"*

Discipling/Making Disciples—*"to make disciples" is to cultivate relationships with unbelievers, teaching them to have an intimate and transformative relationship with Jesus and to perpetuate the process with others*

We discussed that it is every disciple's job to make more disciples of Jesus. And that the great commission of Matthew 28:19-20 was given to all who follow Christ.

- **John 17:18-23** –Who is represented by the "them" in v.18? Who are "they" throughout the passage?

Introduction

In this session, we are going to explore some of the qualities seen in Jesus' discipleship style, some of the Biblical characteristics of a disciple, and how we might begin living intentionally as individuals and congregations who make disciples of Jesus Christ.

How is Biblical discipleship more than just sitting in Sunday School or listening to a sermon?

- It's a call to radical commitment
- It's a decision to die to ourselves
- Biblical discipleship takes place not in the classroom but in life itself.

Jesus' Discipleship Style

When discussing what it means to be a disciple and how to go about making disciples, we must first look at some of the characteristics of the way Jesus approached the subject. Without exploring the style of Jesus, we cannot hope to understand His process and how we might implement His core principles.

1. Small Groups
 - Jesus was rarely in one-on-one discipleship situations...rather, we often see Jesus functioning in small groups. While He is found in large crowds, it is often with a smaller group (the Apostles) that intimately teaches and trains for ministry. The small group was equipped so that they could begin equipping others to do the same.
 - The smaller the group, the more opportunity there is for effective instruction.
 - Learning skyrockets when people interact with each other as they grow together in Christ.
2. Teach Verbally
 - We must teach disciples to open their mouths and teach others what the Scripture says and how to use it.
 - **2 Timothy 3:15-17**—Is this just for Timothy to be equipped or the entire congregation?
 - What are ways we can train disciples to teach others verbally?
 - What helped Timothy know he was saved and on the right track?
 - This includes teaching disciples to Study scripture and use/apply it in their daily lives so that they can teach others to do the same.
3. Be Relational
 - Discipleship is about relationships, not programs.
 - It does not happen in “class” or only in designated “study times.”
Discipleship happens in the context of life.
4. Equip Disciples to Reproduce
 - Discipleship goes hand-in-hand with evangelism; they are not to be separated.
 - Reproduction involves evangelism, teaching, and sending out.
 - Equip each disciple in order to send them out to reproduce.
 - Discipleship that doesn’t result in outreach is faulty discipleship.
5. Have Accountability
 - Mutual accountability
 - Mutual sharing and bearing
 - Mutual encouraging and confronting
6. Develop Skills
 - While each disciple should develop the same set of basic skills (reproducing, confronting, teaching Christ, etc), we must utilize their strengths while strengthening their weaknesses.
7. Disciple in Numbers
 - **Luke 10:1-12**
 - i. Jesus knew it would be a tough, but doable challenge...therefore, he sent each out with a partner.

While these are some of the many characteristics of Jesus' discipleship style, we must also realize that we have the freedom to implement his principles in creative ways. Let's look at some of the Biblical Characteristics of a disciple of Jesus.

Biblical Characteristics of a Disciple

We looked at a few briefly in the last session. In this session we are going to add to this list some more of those characteristics you are to teach a disciple. When beginning a discipleship process, before you consider how to make disciples as an individual or congregation, you must understand what characteristics Jesus expected in His disciples and those commitments he calls us to make. We are only able to teach those traits we understand and practice to others.

What commitments do you require of your family, congregation, seekers?

Commitments/characteristics Jesus required of anyone who followed Him:

- To evangelize and be immersed (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Mark 1:16-18)
- To center one's life around Jesus (Matt. 19:16-30)
- To go out in pairs (Luke 10:1-12)-if not a requirement it is a great example!
- To deal radically with sin and repent (Luke 13:1-5; Matt. 5:27-30; John 5:1-17; John 8:1-11)
- To seek after God with everything you have and place Him above everything (Matt. 6:33; Matt. 13:44-46)
- To accept the difficulty of following him (Luke 9:57-62)
- To listen and obey Christ's teachings (John 8:31-32)
- To bear fruit (John 15:5-8)
- To imitate Christ (Luke 6:39-40)
- To deny our selves (Luke 9:23-26; Luke 14:25-27; Luke 14:31-33)
- Listen and obey His Word immediately (Mark 1:18; John 12:47-50)
- Obey God's Word over anything else (Mark 7:5-13)

Are we calling our current members to the same commitments as Jesus called us to? Do we teach each new convert about radical commitment?

Remember, a disciple is a "student of Christ who accepts His teachings and aligns his/her life with Christ by imitating Him."

How effectively is this being carried out in churches today? What commitments to we neglect? In what ways do we see our members holding each other accountable?

I am convinced that if we take the principles of the way Jesus made disciples, and held ourselves and other disciples to the high standard of commitment that Jesus teaches, we will not only see spiritual and numerical growth, but we will begin to see disciples who actually begin to look and act like Jesus Christ!

Putting this all together

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God promises Kingdom Growth but clearly states that it must happen through intentional discipleship. We must "cultivate relationships with unbelievers, teaching them to have an intimate and transformative relationship with Jesus and to perpetuate the process with others! But what if we haven't done this with those who are already Christians?

1. Spend time in prayer and begin developing a plan (Luke 14:28-30)
2. Consider The Outcome (Luke 14:31-33)
3. Work on yourself first (Luke 6:41-42)
4. Begin holding new converts to God's standards (Luke 6:40)
5. Work with current Christians who are like-minded and willing to be disciplined
 - a. Create a group of those interested in learning and exploring it!
6. Allow the group to drive the congregation in Discipleship
7. Spend lots of time in prayer
8. Expect confrontation
9. Make sure you are modeling the life of a committed Disciple
10. Allow God to work through your efforts.

Josh's Discipleship Applications

As I have recently begun to practice intentional discipleship, I have taken a few people into my group and have created an ever-changing process as we learn what is working and what is not. From the beginning I explained my goals, asked them if they were still interested, asked for certain commitments, and began with evangelism training. Following is some of this information.

Required Commitments:

My time is valuable, and so is theirs. If we are going to spend time together for intentional discipleship purposes, I ask each individual to omit to the following requests:

1. We commit to meet together regularly
2. They will do the homework before each meeting (it
3. They will continue to align themselves to Christ as seen in the Word of god—as soon as they discover it in the Word.
4. They will pray for at least three friends who need to hear the Gospel and will attempt to get in a study with them.
5. They will go with me on studies whenever possible so that they can learn how to share God's Story.

Purpose of Each Study (Regardless of Spiritual Maturity) as seen in James 1:22-25:

1. To Look Closely
2. To remember what's going on
3. To do what it teaches

Conclusion

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In this session, we discussed some of the many qualities seen in Jesus' discipleship style, some of the Biblical characteristics of a disciple, and how we might begin living intentionally as individuals and congregations who make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Our conclusion and application is:

1. Each of us is responsible for making disciples
2. The process begins with making a commitment yourself
3. We must hold others to radical commitment to Christ
4. God has promised growth if we will begin to disciple
5. The COC is in desperate need of a restoration to radical discipleship and commitment
6. It starts with us in this room, right here, right now!

Discipleship is not just a method or a program, it is a way of life. Our lifestyle must be one of intentional discipling.