

A group of people are on a river, some in blue and yellow inflatable rafts. They are surrounded by steep, rocky mountains with some trees. The scene is outdoors, likely in a national park or similar natural area. The text is overlaid on the top half of the image.

THE CORE

OF OUR MISSION

MAKING DISCIPLE MAKERS

Foundational Beliefs Regarding God's Mission of Making Disciples

1. The Bible Contains God-Inspired *Messages, Models* and *Methods* for God's Mission!

Messages

Gen 1:26-28; 12:1-3; Mk 1:14-18; Jn 1:10-18; Rm 5:6-11; 1 Co 15:1-8; 2 Cor 5:14-21; Eph 2:1-22; Rev 21:3-4

Models

Ezra 7:10; Matt. 4:1-10, John 17; 20:21; Acts 2:42-47; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 9:19-23; Phil. 2:5-8; 2 Tim. 3:16-17

Methods

Joshua 1:8; Matt 4:17-19; 6:9-13; 18:15-17; John 4:4-42; 17:4,8; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 11:1; Gal 6:1; Phil 3:17; 4:9

2. Our God is passionately on mission throughout the world. The central theme of the Bible is *God's mission and commission to redeem people from every tribe, tongue, people and nation and restore them to Himself!*

Gen. 12:3; Psalm 67; Isa. 11:10; Matt 28:18-20; John 3:16; Gal. 3:6-9; 16; Revelation 5:9-10; 7:9; 21:3

3. The overwhelming witness of the Bible declares *the greatest difficulty for God in His redemptive mission for the world is His very own people.*

Gen. 3:6-9; 6:5-8; 2 Kings 17:7-23; Isa. 2:5-17; 65:1-7; Jer. 2:4-13, 23-37; 6:10-19; Ezekiel 22; 34:1-10; Hos. 12:1-13:16; Matt. 7:21-23; Luke 6:46; Acts 7:51-53; Rom. 1:18-3:20; Heb. 5:11-6:2; 1 John 2:15-16

4. God's chosen method to achieve His mission of redeeming and restoring humanity to Himself is accomplished through *relational disciple making as modeled by the life and ministry of Jesus.*

Matthew 4:19; 28:18-20; Luke 4:1-19; 6:40; 24:44-49; John 1:14,18,38-43; 5:19-20; 8:28-29; 17:4-8; 20:21; Acts 2:22; 4:13; 1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 4:9; Col. 1:28-29; 1 Thess. 2:8; 2 Tim. 2:2; Heb. 2:10; 1 John 2:6

5. The prevailing gospel influencing Western Church culture and beyond says:

"You can become a Christian without following Jesus."

Matt. 7:15; 24:11, 24; Luke 6:46; John 8:44; Acts 20:29-30; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Phil. 3:2; 2 Peter 2:1-3

6. The reality is the gospel we *believe in* naturally determines and produces:

the kind of disciple we become, the kind of message we proclaim,

the kind of theology we teach, the kind of disciples we make,

the kind of life we live, and the kind of legacy we will leave.

Matthew 12:33; 13:18-23; Mark 1:15; Luke 6:43-44; Acts 4:13 Rom. 1:16; 10:3; Col. 1:28-29; 1 Cor. 15:1-8

7. Jesus' command for all of His followers is to make disciples, *not converts.*

Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 6:40; John 8:31-32; 13:34-35; 15:7-13; 2 Tim. 2:2; Heb. 5:11-6:3; 2 Pet. 1:3-11

8. *All* who are called to *salvation* are also called to *follow Jesus as his disciple!*

Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 8:34; Luke 14:25-27; Phil. 2:12-15; 2 Thess. 2:13-15; Titus 2:11-15; 1 John 2:3-6

9. Making disciples is *the primary responsibility* Jesus has *explicitly authorized* His followers to accomplish and fulfill.

Matt. 13:52-53; 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 6:40; 24:46-49; John 17:4, 6-8; 20:21; Acts 1:8; Col. 1:28

10. God's desire for *all of his children* is for us to become *Christlike*. The process in which this occurs is called *discipleship or disciple making*.

Luke 6:40; Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Galatians 4:19; Eph. 4:13; Col. 1:28; 3:10; 1 Tim. 4:7b-8; 1 John 2:3-6

11. Pastors are not responsible to disciple everyone in their congregation, but they are responsible to *personally model and develop a discipleship culture* which provides intentional opportunities for people to grow into mature, reproducing disciples.

1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 1:28-29; Philippians 3:17, 4:9; 2 Tim 1:13-14; 2:2

“Who Are You *and* What Are You Doing Here?”

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. Ephesians 2:10 NASB

My IDENTITY: “WHO Am I?” “WHO am I Created to BE?”

At this stage of my life and at this place in my faith journey, how would I describe **My Identity**? What do the Scriptures say about **Who I Am In Christ**?

(For further insights from Scripture, please see page 31, “Who I Am In Christ.”)

(See Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:10
also Luke 6:40; Galatians 4:19; Ephesians 4:13)

My PURPOSE or MISSION: “WHAT Am I DOING Here?”

“WHAT am I Created to DO?”

At this stage of my life and at this place in my faith journey, how would I describe **My Purpose or Mission**? **What has God Created me to DO?**

What AM I doing here on this planet at this time and place in history?

*I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.
Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father
and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have
given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

Matthew 28:18-20 NLT

My POSITION: “WHERE Am I Created to GO?”

Where can I be most effective and fruitful in living out what God has created me for?

Where do I sense God has created me to GO to live out His primary calling on my life?

Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. John 20:21 NLT

I am praying not only for these disciples

but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. John 17:18,20 NLT

“Is the life I am living the same as the life that wants to live in me?” – Parker Palmer

Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation

Team up with one or two people near you and share your responses with one another. Then pray for one another that God would begin to bring clarity, confidence, and conviction in these three foundational areas of our lives during our time together.

The Cost of Drifting Off Course

Matt Emmons – Olympic Medalist

Definitions of “Drift”

“to be carried along by an outside force”

“a gradual deviation from an original course, model, method, or intention”

“to move aimlessly from place to place or from one activity to another”

“to wander or move gradually away from a fixed course or point; to stray”

What does the Bible have to say about our “**drifting off course**” from God’s intention for our lives?

(Isaiah 9:16; 53:6; Jeremiah 50:6; Psalm 14:1-3; Prov. 20:9; Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 3:12, 23)

How might **churches** or even **denominations** drift off course?

How might we be leading **our people** “astray” from **God’s primary mission**?

What are **two of the most common drifts** in churches?

Taken from *Simple Church*, by Eric Geiger

1. We Drift *Toward* Complexity and Confusion!

2. We Drift *Off* Mission!

What are the implications of drifting off course for those of us who are disciples of Jesus?

What is the cost of *our* drifting off course?

What is God saying to me about how *I* have drifted off course...about *our church*?

How will I respond to what I sense God is saying to me?

How Has the Church Drifted Off Course?

We are NOT Focusing on God's Priority for His Church!

1. We are Focusing on Imparting Information to People

instead of

Training People to Become Obedient Disciples!

Isaiah 5:21; Matthew 7:24-27; 28:18-20; Luke 6:40,46; John 3:36; Acts 2:42-47;
Romans 1:5; 8:29; 12:16; 1 Corinthians 8:1-2; 13:2; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-13; James 1:22

2. We are Engaging People in Multiple Church Programs and Activities

instead of

Developing a Missional Culture Focused on Disciple Making!

Proverbs 29:18; Matthew 7:21-23; Mark 3:14; Luke 10:41,42; John 1:14,18; 13:15; 17:4-8; 20:21;
Acts 2:42-47; 4:13; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Philippians 3:12-17; Colossians 1:28,29; 1 John 1:1-3

3. We Are Focused on Making “Converts” *and* Church Members

instead of

Making Disciples Who Are Trained to Make Other Disciples!

Matthew 23:15; John 15:8; 17:4-8; 20:21; 1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Philippians 2:12,13; 3:17; 4:9;
Colossians 1:28,29; Hebrews 5:11-6:3; 13:21; 1 Timothy 4:7b-8; 2 Timothy 1:13,14; 2:2; 3:10,14

4. We are Measuring Our Success by Attendance, Buildings, *and* Cash

instead of

How Many Disciples We Are Making Who Are Growing Into Maturity!

Joshua 1:7, 8; Eccl. 2:11; Jeremiah 17:5, 6; Matthew 28:18-20; John 15:8; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3;
Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 4:11-13; Colossians 1:28-29; Hebrews 5:11-6:3; 13:21; 2 Tim. 2:2

How Serious is “Drifting Off Course” according to Jesus?

*“Knowing the correct password—saying ‘Master, Master,’
for instance—isn’t going to get you anywhere with me.*

What is required is serious obedience—doing what my Father wills.

*I can see it now—at the Final Judgment thousands strutting up to me and saying,
‘Master, we preached the Message, we bashed the demons,
our God-sponsored projects had everyone talking.’*

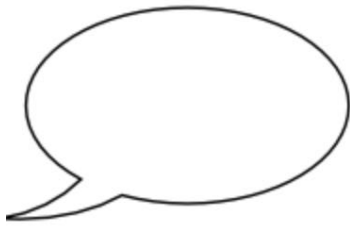
And do you know what I am going to say?

‘You missed the boat. All you did was use me to make yourselves important.

You don’t impress me one bit. You’re out of here.’”

~ Jesus - Matthew 7:21-23 (The Message)

The Clarity of Jesus' Command & Commission in Matthew 28:18-20



What did the eleven disciples have in their “thought bubble?”

One Pastor's Story of Drifting Off Course

The Core of Our Mission



What has Jesus *authorized us to do* as His followers?
What is the primary responsibility Jesus has left for us to accomplish?



What is our **context** to make disciples?
What boundaries, barriers, or limitations are there in accomplishing this responsibility?



How do we make disciples?
What instructions did Jesus give to the eleven?

What has Jesus **promised us** as we follow Him in obedience to His command?



Making Disciples

**is the primary responsibility Jesus has *explicitly* authorized
His followers to accomplish and fulfill!**

What are the barriers and/or issues that hinder the common Christian from realizing this vital truth from the life and teachings of Jesus?

How have you drifted off course from accomplishing Jesus' mandate for making disciples?

What are some practical steps you could take to realign your life of faith to become a disciple-maker?

The Commands of Jesus

Jesus left His disciples with a clear command *and* commission in Matthew 28:18-20:

*Jesus came and told his disciples,
“I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.
Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.
And be sure of this:
I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

If we are to fulfill this command and commission, we must first *know* the commands of Jesus and then, by God’s grace, seek to be *living them out in obedience*. Only then can we truly reveal these commands effectively to new disciples by *modeling for them* and *sharing with them how to live them out*.

What are the commands of Jesus that we must teach new disciples?

Actually, there are **approximately 382 imperative commands** of Jesus recorded in the four Gospel accounts. When you subtract the repetitions and those commands made to a specific historical incident, there are still some **224** commands attributed to Jesus. These commands, however, can be **summarized under seven primary categories**:

- 1. Repent, Believe, Receive the Holy Spirit, and Follow Jesus as a Disciple**
- 2. Be Baptized & Celebrate the Lord’s Supper**
- 3. Love God** through Worship, Obedience to Scripture, and Seeking God’s Kingdom for the World
- 4. Abide in Christ** through His Words, Passionate Prayer, and Abound in Fruitfulness
- 5. Love & Forgive Others:** Our Neighbor, Other Disciples, The Poor, Our Enemies
- 6. Give Generously to God and Others** through Stewardship of Life (Time, Talents, Treasure)
- 7. Make Disciples of All People Groups** – Teaching them to Obey God’s Word

What Is The Primary Problem with The Church in Our Country?

How would you answer the above question?

A number of seasoned disciple-making leaders in the Church today believe the answer is:

You Can Become a “Christian” WITHOUT Following Jesus!

The prevailing gospel influencing Western Church culture and beyond says:]

“You Can Have Salvation WITHOUT Discipleship.”

What is your first reaction or response to this statement? If this is true throughout your culture, then **what are the implications and consequences for your spiritual growth?**

The Gospel message Jesus proclaimed and the message His apostles recorded for us in the New Testament reveals:

“The Proof of One’s Salvation IS a Life of Discipleship to Jesus!”

***“Christianity without the living Jesus Christ
is inevitably Christianity without discipleship and
Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.***

An idea about Christ, a doctrinal system, a general religious recognition of grace or forgiveness of sins does not require discipleship. In truth it even excludes discipleship.”

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* p.59

“Barcode Faith”



What’s inside the container doesn’t matter. The scanner reads only the bar-code claims is within the container. The register screen validates only what the bar-code declares.

***“For God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance,
but the LORD looks at the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7***

The Gospel Jesus proclaimed and which was repeated by the authors of the New Testament Scriptures says:

“The PROOF of one’s Salvation IS A LIFE ENGAGED in Discipleship!

ALL Who Are Called to Salvation Are ALSO Called to Discipleship.”

~ Bill Hull, *Conversion and Discipleship*.

“So, the greatest issue facing the world today, with all its heartbreaking needs, is whether those who, by profession or culture, are identified as “Christians” will become disciples—students, apprentices, practitioners—of Jesus Christ, steadily learning from him how to live the life of the Kingdom of the Heavens into every corner of human existence.” ~ Dallas Willard, The Great Omission, xv.

“We are coming into a time when many churches and Christians who are in leadership positions will be able to say, ‘it’s all about discipleship and transformation into Christlikeness.’”

~ Dallas Willard, *Living In Christ’s Presence*, p.10.

The Definition of a Disciple – Who *or* What Is a Disciple?

Write out a brief definition of a “disciple” and give me your favorite verse or passage describing a disciple of Jesus.

Scriptures Revealing the Qualities of a Disciple

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Matthew 4:18-22 | Matthew 28:18-20 |
| 2. Mark 1:16-20 | Mark 3:13-19 |
| 3. Mark 8:34-37 | Luke 14:25-27 |
| 4. Luke 6:40 | Matt 10:24-25a |
| 5. John 1:43; 8:31-32; 13:34-45; 15:8; 17:4-8 | |
| 6. Acts 1:8; 4:13; 17:1-7; 20:20; 28:30-31 | |
| 7. 1 Corinthians 4:15-17 | 1 Cor. 11:1 |
| 8. Phil. 3:17; 4:9 | Col. 1:28-29; 3:10 |
| 9. 1 Thessalonians 2:8 | 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15 |
| 10. 2 Timothy 2:1-2 | 1 John 2:6 |

Who is a “Disciple”?

“Learner, *student*, apprentice, *follower*”

1 Chronicles 25:8 “*tālmîd*”

(A Musician engaged in learning process; An Apprentice learning a trade)

Isaiah 8:16; 50:4; 54:13 “*limmūd*” (taught one, trained one, learner)

In the NT, the Greek word for disciple is used 295x as a noun and a verb.

The Evidence of an Authentic Disciple According to Jesus

1. Obedience to God’s Word – John 8:31-32

2. Loving Other Believers as Christ Loves Us – John 13:34-35

3. Glorifying God through Bearing Much Fruit – John 15:8

Fruit in **Our Character** – Gal. 5:22-23; Phil. 1:11

Fruit of **Our Words of Praise & Thanksgiving** – Hebrews 13:15;

Fruit of **The Gospel Transforming Lives** – Romans 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:15; Col. 1:6

Fruit of **Godly Life Trained by Discipline** – Hebrews 12:11

Fruit of **God’s Kingdom Qualities** – Matthew 21:43

Fruit of **Good & Righteous Deeds** – Matt 7:17; Rom 7:4; 15:28; Col 1:10; James 3:18

Fruit in **Making Disciples** – John 15:8; Matthew 28:18-20

(See also: Luke 6:40; 9:23-25; 14:26-27; John 15:7-14; 20:21)

The Cost and Commitment of Following Jesus as His Disciple

Luke 9:23

- 1. “Deny Oneself”** – Putting Aside Self-Centered Desires, Focusing on God, His Will, and Others before Oneself. A God-Focused Life.
- 2. “Taking Up One’s Cross Daily”** – Identifying Completely with Christ and Embracing the Blessings and the Consequences of being His Disciple.
- 3. “Following Me”** – Daily living out the cost by following the life and teachings of Jesus in loving devotion and obedience.

Luke 9:57-62

Putting Jesus and Our Calling to Discipleship *Before*:

- 1. Our Comforts & Securities – 9:58**
- 2. Our Excuses & Indefinite Delays – 9:59-60**
- 3. Our Competing Priorities – 9:61-62**

Luke 14:25-33

Putting Jesus and Our Calling to Discipleship *Before*:

- 1. Our Family – 14:26**
- 2. Our Self – 14:26-27**
- 3. Our Possessions – 14:33**

Definitions of a Disciple of Jesus

*“A **disciple** is one who **responds to the invitation of Jesus**
to follow Him in allegiance to His authority*

and

in obedience to His commands

toward the goal of becoming like Jesus.”

Luke 6:40; Rom. 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:10; 1 John 2:6

Other Brief Definitions of a Disciple:

“One who is Following the Life and Teachings of Jesus to Become Like Him.”

“One who is Learning to Live and Love like Jesus.”

A One-Verse Description of a Disciple:

Jesus called out to them,

“Follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!”

Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17

A Disciple is one who is:

- 1. FOLLOWING Jesus**, (Seeking to Imitate His life and character; to Obey His teachings.)
- 2. Being FORMED by Jesus** (Being Transformed from the Inside Out)
- 3. FAITHFUL to the Mission of Jesus** (Committed to His Mission of Making Disciples)

Adapted from: *Discipleship Handbook* by Bobby Harrington and Josh Patrick

What Is God’s Desire for Every One of His Children?

Discover the **Common Theme** for Each Set of Scriptures:

- 1. Matthew 10:24-25a & Mark 1:17 & Luke 6:40**
- 2. 1 Corinthians 11:1 & Ephesians 5:1 & Philippians 2:5**
- 3. Romans 8:29 & 2 Corinthians 3:18 & Colossians 3:10**
- 4. Galatians 4:19 & Ephesians 4:13 & Colossians 1:28**
- 5. 1 Timothy 4:7b-8 & Titus 2:12-14 & 2 Peter 1:5-8**
- 6. Colossians 1:10 & Colossians 2:6 & 1 John 2:6**

The Definition of Discipleship – What Is Discipleship?

Scriptures Revealing the Concepts of Discipleship

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Matthew 4:18-22 | Matthew 28:18-20 |
| 2. Mark 1:16-20 | Mark 3:13-19 |
| 3. Mark 8:34-37 | Luke 14:25-27 |
| 4. Luke 6:40 | Matt 10:24-25a |
| 5. John 1:43; 8:31-32; 13:34-45; 15:8; 17:4-8 | |
| 6. Acts 1:8; 4:13; 17:1-7; 20:20; 28:30-31 | |
| 7. 1 Corinthians 4:15-17 | 1 Cor. 11:1 |
| 8. Phil. 3:17; 4:9 | Col. 1:28-29; 3:10 |
| 9. 1 Thess. 2:1-12 | 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15 |
| 10. 2 Timothy 2:1-2 | 1 John 2:6 |

-ship indicates a:

state or condition - *friendship*

ability or skill - *authorship; scholarship*

The process of learning to follow Jesus to become LIKE Him!

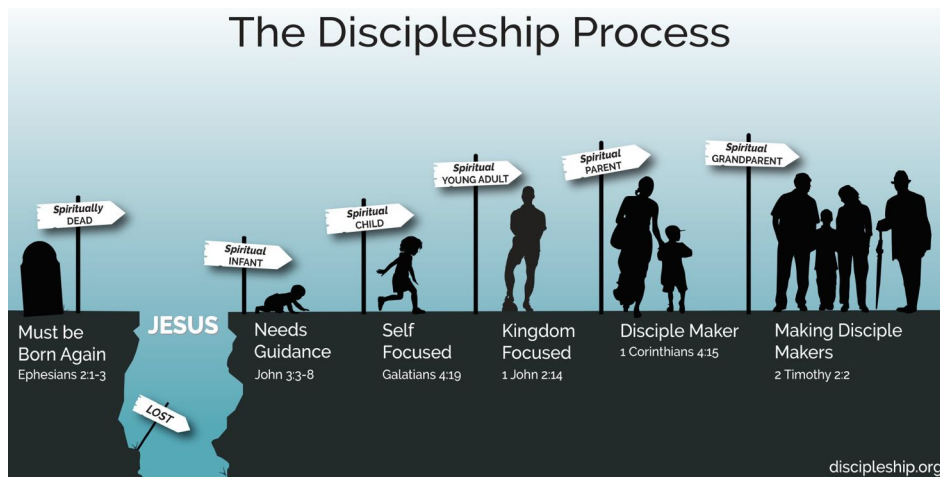
**“Discipleship is the process of helping another person learn,
through the power of The Holy Spirit,
to Live, and Love like Jesus.”**

Luke 6:40; John 14:6; 1 Corinthians 11:1; Phil. 2:3-8; John 5:19; 8:28-29; 12:49-50; 13:34-35

- 1. We talk.**
- 2. I do. You watch. We talk.**
- 3. I do. You help. We talk.**
- 4. You do. I help. We talk.**
- 5. You do. I watch. We talk.**
- 6. You talk to someone else. I talk to someone else.**
- 7. (Repeat the process with them until they can reproduce it in others)**

In what context have you experienced this type of a learning relationship? How might you take the above steps as a process to engage in an intentional discipleship relationship with someone else?

What Are the Spiritual Stages of a Disciple's Growth?



1. Spiritually Dead: Ephesians 2:1-3; 4:17-22; 5:3-8; Colossians 1:13, 21; 2:13

2. Spiritually Born: John 1:12-13; 3:3-8; Ephesians 2:4-5; 1 Peter 1:3

3. Spiritual Infants: Hebrews 5:12-13; 1 Peter 2:2-3

4. Spiritual Child: 1 John 2:1, 12-13, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21

5. Spiritual Young Adult: 1 John 2:13-14

6. Spiritual Parent: 1 Corinthians 4:4-17; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 2:2

7. Spiritual Grandparent: Matthew 28:18-20; John 15:8; 2 Timothy 2:2;

At what stage do you presently find yourself as a disciple of Jesus?

What intentional steps are you taking to increase in your spiritual maturity and fitness?

Excerpt From: Jim Putman. *Real-Life Discipleship*.

General Characteristics of Each Sage of Spiritual Growth:

SPIRITUALLY DEAD: Unbelieving; Rebellious; Disobedient; Existing in Darkness

INFANT: Ignorant; Confused; Dependent

CHILD: Self-Centered; Self-Absorbed; Prideful; Low View of Self

**YOUNG ADULT: Action/Service-Oriented; Zealous; God-Centered;
Focused upon the needs of others; Independent**

PARENTS & GRANDPARENTS: Intentional about Reproducing; Strategic; Self-Feeding; Mission-Minded; Team Player; Dependable; Living for others; Focused upon Multiplication; Investing in the lives of reproducers (“Forth-Soilers”)

SPIRITUALLY DEAD: People in this stage have not yet accepted Christ as Lord and Savior. They may completely reject God, they may be seeking God, they may be “spiritual”, they may even claim to know God or be a Christian, when in reality, they are their own god.

INFANT: People in this stage have accepted Christ, but haven’t moved much past that point. They can be new believers or they might be stagnant, long-time Christians. Life is generally all about them and their needs.

CHILD: People in this stage are growing in their relationship with God and are also beginning to grow in their relationship with other Christians. They are applying God’s Word in their life and allowing others to walk beside them in their journey following Christ. However, it’s still mostly about them – their needs, comfort, etc.

YOUNG ADULT: People in this stage are making a big shift from being self-centered to more others-centered. They’re beginning to understand their role as a giver, rather than a taker – ministering to others, putting others first – being doers of the Word.

PARENTS & GRANDPARENTS: People in this stage have a solid understanding of God’s Word and a deep, abiding relationship with the Father. They are living out God’s Word in their daily life. They are others-centered and God-dependent. They are able to reproduce mature disciples of Jesus by inviting others to follow them as they follow Christ. They are especially focused upon investing in the lives of those (“Forth-Soilers”) who are making disciples and modeling for others what it means to be a disciple maker.

How do you relate to people within your church context who are at different stages than you in this growth process? (i.e. with compassion, patience or with judgment and criticism?)

Excerpt From: Jim Putman. *Real-Life Discipleship*.

Is The Call to Discipleship for *Every* Believer?

The gospel that Jesus proclaimed, and which the authors of the New Testament Scriptures repeated, reveals:

“ALL Who Are Called to Salvation Are *ALSO* Called to a life of Discipleship.”

(The following Scriptures are a *small sample* of the multitude of passages that validate this vital biblical principle.)

Jesus:

Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of ALL peoples....

~ Matthew 28:18-20 (cf. John 17:20)

A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. ~ Luke 6:40

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

~ John 8:31-32

*And He summoned **the crowd with His disciples**, and said to them, “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 and the gospel’s will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?*

~ Mark 8:34-36

*Now **large crowds** were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, “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. **Whoever** does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”*

~ Luke 14:25-27

Paul:

For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son.

~ Romans 8:29

We proclaim Him [Christ], warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ~ Colossians 1:28

*So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.***

*Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be **blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach** in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life. ~ Philippians 2:12-15*

But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.

~ 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15

...train yourself to be godly. Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come. ~1 Timothy 4:7b-8

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you. ~ Titus 2:11-15

Author of Hebrews:

Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. ~ Hebrews 5:8-14

James:

Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ~ James 1:21-22

You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone...For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead. ~ James 2:24-26

Peter:

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. ~ 1 Peter 2:9

By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.

In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.

The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins.

So, dear brothers and sisters, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Do these things, and you will never fall away. Then God will give you a grand entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. ~ 2 Peter 1:3-11

John:

And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments. If someone claims, "I know God," but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. But those who obey God's word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did. ~ 1 John 2:3-6

And we will receive from him whatever we ask because we obey him and do the things that please him. And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us. Those who obey God's commandments remain in fellowship with him, and he with them. And we know he lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us. ~ 1 John 3:22-24

Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome. ~ 1 John 5:3

What is your immediate reaction to this collection of Scripture?

What are some practical examples of how you have intentionally lived out this call to spiritual maturity in Christ through a process of discipleship to Jesus?

Jesus as Our Message *and* Our Model for Life and Ministry

Scriptures Revealing **Jesus is Divine**

1. John 1:1-5, 14, 18
2. Colossians 1:15-20; 2:9
3. Hebrews 1:3, 8
4. Matthew 1:18-23
5. Matthew 3:16-17; 17:5
6. Luke 5:20-24
7. Romans 1:4; 9:5
8. John 5:17-30
9. John 10:30-33
10. John 14:6-11

Scriptures Revealing **the Message of Jesus is Divine**

1. John 1:1-5, 14, 18
2. John 7:16
3. John 8:28
4. John 12:49-50
5. John 13:3
6. John 14:10-11
7. John 14:24
8. John 15:15
9. John 17:8, 14
10. John 18:37

Scriptures Revealing **the Model of Jesus' Life is Divine**

1. Matthew 4:4,7,10
2. Philippians 2:5-8
3. John 1:14, 18; 13:12-17
4. John 14:12; 15:15
5. John 17:4-8, 18; 20:21
6. Acts 2:22; 4:13
7. 1 Corinthians 11:1
8. 1 Peter 2:21
9. 1 John 2:6
10. 1 John 3:16

Scriptures Revealing **the Ministry Methods of Jesus are Divine**

1. John 5:19-20; 8:28-29
2. Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17-18
3. Mark 3:13-19
4. John 15:5, 8, 15b
5. Matthew 10:37-38
6. Matthew 28:18-20
7. Acts 1:8
8. Matthew 10:37-38
9. Matthew 18:15-17
10. Luke 11:1-4

Could it be that some Churches have *separated*
the Message of Jesus
from
the Model and Methods of Jesus
and *Yet Still Expect* the Results of Jesus?

Commitments and Responsibilities of a First-Century Disciple:

- 1. Committed to following and learning from a Rabbi.**
- 2. Learning, memorizing and obeying the Rabbi's teachings.**
- 3. Learning and applying the Rabbi's way of ministry.**
- 4. Imitating the Rabbi's life and character.**
- 5. Training and Raising up others to become their disciples.**

Adapted From: Bill Hull. *The Complete Book of Discipleship*.

What insights and questions come to mind as you consider these responsibilities in light of your journey of faith as a Christian? Are there any similarities...omissions?

Which of the above responsibilities do you find are the most difficult for followers of Jesus today in your context and culture?

Why *Don't* We Make Disciples?

- 1. We are too busy! We lack the availability of time to invest into discipleship!**
- 2. We are not clear what a "disciple" truly is! We lack teaching *and* tools on discipleship!**
- 3. We don't know how because we've never been discipled!**
- 4. We have no model to follow so we don't know how to make disciples!**
- 5. We are distracted by so many other responsibilities!**
- 6. We don't know the implications of our identity in Christ!**
- 7. We believe it is the responsibility of "Professionals" – Pastors, Missionaries, and Bible Scholars!**
- 8. It is too uncomfortable! People might leave our church and start their own.**
- 9. The cost is too great! (time, energy, personal investment of one's life)**
- 10. We're focusing on the wrong priority!**
("Conversion" Decisions, Making Members, Baptisms, Church Growth, Church Programs, Exciting & Attractive Worship Services, Self-Recognition, etc.)
- 11. We are in a WAR with the enemy of our soul – Satan and his forces!**
"The more we sweat in peace, The less we bleed in war!"
~ US Navy Seal Commandment
- 12. We are too lazy and just plain disobedient!**
- 13. We simply don't love Jesus enough!**

The Core Issue – The Importance of the Gospel

“The Western segment of the church today lives in a bubble of historical illusion about the meaning of discipleship and the gospel.” ~ Dallas Willard

The gospel we *believe in* naturally determines:

the kind of *disciple we become*, the kind of *message we proclaim*,
the kind of *theology we teach*, the kind of *disciples we make*,
the kind of life we live, and the kind of *legacy we will leave*.

Matt. 7:17-19; 12:33; Mark 1:15; Luke 4:18; 6:43-44; Romans 1:16; Colossians 1:28-29; 1 Cor. 15:1-9

The prevailing gospel influencing Western Church culture *and* beyond says:







“You can become a Christian, and not follow Jesus.”

Matt. 7:15; 24:11, 24; John 8:44; Acts 20:29-30; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Phil. 3:2; 2 Peter 2:1-3

However, **the Gospel Jesus proclaimed includes following Him in allegiance and obedience!**

Matt. 4:17-20; Mark 1:1, 14-17; 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-25; 14:25-35; John 14:15; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

The Six Gospels that are Prominently Taught Today:

THE GOSPELS IN COMPETITION					
					
FORGIVENESS ONLY	LEFT	PROSPERITY	CONSUMER	RIGHT	KINGDOM
"BE FORGIVEN"	"HELP THE NEEDY"	"CLAIM MY RIGHTS"	"MEET MY NEEDS"	"BE RIGHT"	"FOLLOW JESUS"

WHAT EACH GOSPEL CREATES . . .					
FOLLOWING JESUS IS OPTIONAL	DETACHED SOCIAL ACTION	ENTITLEMENT	SELF-INDULGENCE	ARROGANCE	DISCIPLES WHO LIVE AND LOVE LIKE JESUS

Conversion & Discipleship: You Can't Have One Without the Other. Bill Hull, p.33

Why it matters:

- The gospel we preach and teach determines the kind of disciples we **produce**.
- If we try to make a Christlike disciple from a *non-discipleship* gospel, we will **fail**.
- Any gospel *without* discipleship creates a self-absorbed, **self-centered** disciple.

“Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.”

~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

What Are Some of the False Gospels Throughout the World Today?

“THE FORGIVENESS ONLY GOSPEL”

Focuses on *escaping Hell* and *assuring Heaven*!

Salvation is the *finish line* of one's faith journey!

We become *spectators*, not *active participants*! Produces casual and complacent “Christians!” Omits the message of repentance and the call to follow Jesus!

Discipleship is completely *optional* – Not a natural part of one's salvation!

“I was more convinced than ever that the preaching like an apostle without joining together those that are awakened and training them up in the ways of God, is only begetting children for the murderer. How much preaching there has been for these twenty years all over Pembrookshire. But no regular societies, no discipline, no order or connection, and the consequence is that nine in ten of the once awakened are now faster asleep than ever.”

~ John Wesley, *Journal* for August 25, 1763, in *Works*, 21:424

My dear Wormwood,

I note with grave displeasure that your patient has become a Christian....

There is no need to despair; hundreds of these adult converts have been reclaimed after a brief sojourn in the Enemy's camp and are now with us.

All the habits of the patient, both mental and bodily, are still in our favour.

One of our great allies at present is the Church itself.

Your affectionate uncle, Screwtape

~ C. S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters

“A notable heresy has come into being throughout evangelical Christian circles – the widely accepted concept that we humans can choose to accept Christ only because we need him as Savior and that we have the right to postpone our obedience to him as Lord as long as we want to....

Salvation apart from obedience is unknown in the sacred scriptures.”

~ A. W. Tozer

“THE CONSUMER GOSPEL”

“*Have it Your Way*” gospel made *for ME*!

Convenient schedule and religious programs for fast pace, fast food consumers

“Sound-bite” theology promising instant results

Focuses upon *being fed* vs. *feeding ourselves*!

Forgiveness and Heaven offered while we still control our own lives

It does *not include* or *require* a life of discipleship to Jesus!

Creates *Self-Indulgence*!

“THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL”

Focuses on abundance, comfort, luxury, and success!

Prosperity is both *spiritual* and *physical*!

The atoning work of Christ guarantees *physical & financial* blessing!

Creates a sense of *entitlement*! We can speak a new reality into existence.

God is *obligated* to fulfill our wants *and* dreams because we are Children of the King!

It neglects discipleship, spiritual *maturity* and any sense of suffering in this life!

“Why Christian faith has failed to transform the masses and to make a more just and peaceful world is because *it has failed to transform the human character*. The reason is that **our gospel most often has *not* been accompanied by discipleship. Discipleship is *not* an essential part of Christianity today, in philosophy, program or curriculum.**”

~ Dallas Willard, The Spirit of the Disciplines

As you reflect upon the descriptions of these three false gospels, how have any of these teachings affected you and/or your church?

What are some possible ways in which you might stand against these false teachings and the effects they have caused in your life and ministry context?

What Are the Dominant Characteristics of the Current Gospel Message?

- 1. Grace is Passive instead of *active*.**
- 2. Faith is Agreement with Doctrine instead of *obedience* to Scripture.**
- 3. Conversion, one’s Salvation experience, is *separate* from Discipleship.**
- 4. Our Gospel has been *reduced* to a Plan of Salvation.**
- 5. Discipleship is *absent* from the Gospel.**
- 6. Discipleship has become *Optional*.**
- 7. Discipleship is focused upon *Me* and how *I* am doing with Jesus.**

What are some of the consequences in your life and ministry of these dominant cultural gospel characteristics? What steps will you take in reversing the affects of these?

What Is The *Solution* to This Problem in The Church?
“Rearrange Your Life Around the Life and Teachings of Jesus!”

Embrace the Gospel Jesus and His Followers Believed, Lived, and Died for!

Where do we start? How do we begin to transform our lives, families, churches, communities, schools, cities, states, and beyond?

What is the Gospel which Jesus, Paul, and the Apostles Believed and Proclaimed?

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

The reign and rule of Christ over ALL of life!

We come under His rule by following Jesus and becoming His disciples

Life in the Kingdom of God is accessible NOW!

Jesus is Savior, Lord, King, and Messiah!

God’s Kingdom exists anywhere the nature and character of Jesus are displayed and revealed. Anywhere God’s will is done and accomplished!

This Gospel creates Disciples who are Learning how to Live and Love like Jesus!

What Are the Characteristics of Jesus’ Gospel?

- 1. It is a “Follow Me” Gospel**
- 2. It is a Faith = Obedience Gospel**
- 3. It is a Live for Others Gospel**
- 4. It is a Gospel that Reproduces Disciples**
- 5. It is a King Jesus Gospel**

“All Who Are Called to Salvation are Called to Discipleship!”

“Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.”

~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

THE CORE CONTENTS of THE GOSPEL

- 1. Jesus is the “Christ”- God’s Anointed King – Mark 1:1; 8:27-29; 9:7; Matthew 1:16; 17:5; 27:11; Luke 23:2-3; John 18:33-37; Acts 2:36**
- 2. The Kingdom of God Has Arrived in Jesus – Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:43; Acts 1:3**
- 3. Jesus Died for our Sins According to the Scriptures – 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:7; Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 53:5**
- 4. Jesus was Buried – 1 Corinthians 15:4; Matthew 12:39-40; Acts 13:29; Isaiah 53:9**
- 5. Jesus was Raised on the Third Day According to the Scriptures – 1 Corinthians 15:4; Psalm 16:8-11; Acts 2:22-28; Mark 9:31; 16:2-7; John 2:19-22**
- 6. Jesus Appeared to Many – 1 Corinthians 15:5-8; Acts 1:3**
- 7. Jesus is Enthroned as Lord and King – 1 Corinthians 15:24-25; Mark 14:61-62; Romans 1:1-5; Psalm 110:1; Daniel 7:13-14; Matt. 22:42-45; 26:64; Heb. 1:3, 8; 8:1; 10:12**
- 8. Jesus Will Come Again as Judge – Matt. 7:21-23; Matt. 25:31-32; John 5:22, 27; 12:48; Acts 10:42; 17:30-31; Romans 2:16; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:11-15**

THE FIRM FOUNDATION of THE GOSPEL

- 1. Jesus Preexisted with the Father – John 1:1; 8:58; 16:28; 17:5; Colossians 1:16-17**
- 2. Jesus is God – One with The Father – John 1:1-3, 18; 10:30; 12:44-45; 14:8-9; Colossians 1:15, 19; 2:9; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Hebrews 1:1-3**
- 3. Jesus Became a Human Being – Matthew 1:16, 20-23; John 1:1, 14; Romans 1:3-4; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 1:15**

THE REQUIRED RESPONSE to THE GOSPEL

- 1. Repent of our Sin – Mark 1:14; Acts 2:38; 20:21**
- 2. Believe in the Gospel – Mark 1:14; John 8:24**
- 3. Follow Jesus – Mark 1:17; 2:14; 8:34; Matt. 16:24**

THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL

The Purpose of the Gospel is Allegiance to King Jesus in All the Nations! – Romans 15:25-26

40 BLESSED BENEFITS of THE GOSPEL*

(*These are simply a sample of the abundant benefits we receive as a result of embracing the gospel that Jesus proclaimed.)

Rescued from the authority, control and domain of darkness	Colossians 1:13
Transferred into the Kingdom of God's beloved Son	Colossians 1:13
Bought by the blood of Christ	1 Corinthians 6:20
Redeemed by the blood of Christ	Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18
Recipient of God's abundant grace	John 1:16; Ephesians 1:6
Salvation	Romans 1:16; 10:10
Regeneration	Titus 3:5
Reconciled to God through Christ	2 Corinthians 5:18
Chosen, called, justified and declared righteous	Romans 5:1,19; 8:30
Peace with God	Romans 5:1
Become a Child of God	John 1:12; Romans 8:16
New Creation and Identity in Christ	2 Corinthians 5:17
Given God's Holy Spirit	Ephesians 1:13; 1 Cor. 2:12
Receive a New Nature	Romans 8:9-11
Chosen to become holy	Ephesians 1:4
Adopted into God's Family	Ephesians 1:5
Eternal Life	John 3:15-16, 36; 17:3
Sins are forgiven	Colossians 1:14
Free from condemnation	Romans 8:1-2
Established, anointed, and sealed by God	2 Corinthians 1:21-22
Made alive together with Christ	Ephesians 2:5
Created for good works God prepared for me	Ephesians 2:10
Chosen and appointed to by Christ to bear much fruit	John 15:8, 16
Member of Christ's Body	1 Corinthians 12:27
Motivated by the love of Christ	2 Corinthians 5:14
Living for Christ	2 Corinthians 5:15
Given the ministry of reconciliation	2 Corinthians 5:18
Ambassador of Christ	2 Corinthians 5:20
Never separated from God's love	Romans 8:35-39
More than a conqueror through Christ's love	Romans 8:37
Friend of Jesus	John 15:15
Joint heir with Christ	Romans 8:17
Child of Light	1 Thessalonians 5:5
Privileged to approach God with boldness	Hebrews 4:16
Given God's extremely precious promises	2 Peter 1:4
Loved by God	1 John 4:10
Citizenship in Heaven	Philippians 3:20
Given authority to make disciple makers	Matthew 28:18-20
Victorious transformation over sin and death	1 Corinthians 15: 51-56
Chosen to become like Jesus	Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:10

How Important is Our Understanding of Salvation?

“Simply put, as now generally understood, being ‘saved’—and hence being a Christian— has no conceptual or practical connection with such a transformation.” ~ Dallas Willard

Our understanding of salvation has been divorced from a commitment to following Jesus. Discipleship is relegated to the status of optional, an add-on to the normal Christian life. Many Christians today believe that if we would like to live closer to Christ, we should be more godly people and live a life of peace, joy, and goodness. That’s great. But in fact, people believe it is one of several options for those who are safe in the security of salvation. It is certainly not something for all Christians. ~ Bill Hull

S A L V A T I O N	
SALVATION	DISCIPLESHIP
CHRISTIAN	DISCIPLE
SALVATION	LORDSHIP
SAVED	SERIOUS
EVANGELISM	DISCIPLESHIP
JUSTIFICATION	SANCTIFICATION
GRACE IS PASSIVE	GRACE IS ACTIVE
TRUST	OBEY
SELF	OTHERS

If we *separate* Salvation & Discipleship we create a *two-tiered system* of Salvation.

The Gospel that Jesus and His disciples believed, taught, and lived out declares:

“All who are called to salvation are called to discipleship.”

While some believe you can have conversion *without* discipleship, the teachings of Jesus clarify the ***proof*** of our conversion is a life of following Jesus as His disciple.

It Takes Effort to Follow Jesus! Active Images of the Life of a Disciple

***“Grace is not opposed to Effort; It is opposed to Earning.
Earning is an Attitude; Effort is an Action.” ~Dallas Willard***

Acts 20:24 – *Finishing the Course (Curriculum, Mission, Task)*

1 Corinthians 9:24 – *Running the Race to Win*; 9:25 – *Every athlete who competes exercises self-control, strict/disciplined training*; 9:26 – *running hard for the finish line*; *Boxing*; 9:27 – *Discipline my body, make it my slave, keep it under control, in top condition*

Galatians 5:7 – *Running well*

Ephesians 6:12 – *Struggle, Wrestling*

Philippians 2:16 – *Run, Hold Fast, Toil*

Philippians 3:13 – *Straining, Reaching Forward*; 3:14 – *Press on*

Colossians 1:29 – *For this purpose I labor, striving according to His power....*

Colossians 4:12 – *Laboring earnestly for you in his prayers....*

1 Timothy 4:7b-8 – *Discipline, Train, Exercise*;

1 Timothy 6:11 – *Pursue righteousness, godliness... 6:12 – Fight the good fight of faith*

2 Timothy 1:8 – *Suffering for the gospel*

2 Timothy 1:14 – *Guard the good deposit entrusted to you*

2 Timothy 2:2 – *Entrust to faithful ones who will be able to teach others also.*

2 Timothy 2:3-4 – *Soldier (Sacrifice, Commitment, Discipline, & Training)*

“The More We Sweat in Peace, the Less We Bleed in War!” – Navy Seals Commandment

2 Timothy 2:5,6 – *Athletes (Discipline & Training); Farmers (Hard Working, Laboring)*

2 Timothy 2:15 – *A worker rightly handling the word of truth*

2 Timothy 2:22 – *Flee, Run, Pursue*

2 Timothy 3:12 – *All who desire to live a godly life in Christ will be persecuted.*

2 Timothy 4:2 – *Preach, Be Ready, Reprove, Rebuke, Exhort*

2 Timothy 4:5 – *Always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*

2 Timothy 4:7 – *I have fought the good fight, finished the race, kept the faith.*

Hebrews 5:14 – *Practice, Trained*

Hebrews 12:1 – *Lay Aside any Hindrances, Run the Race with Endurance*

James 1:12 – *Persevering*

2 Peter 1:5-8 – *Applying All Diligence...*

Jude 3 – *contend earnestly for the faith (fight hard for, defend, exert strenuous intense effort, to agonize -epagōnizomai)*

Revelation 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21 – *All who are victorious (conquer, overcome, prevail)*

“If we refuse to practice, it is not God’s grace that fails when a crisis comes, but our own nature.... God regenerates us and puts us in contact with all His divine resources, but He cannot make us walk according to His will.” ~ Oswald Chambers

Why Bother with Discipleship?

- Because Jesus is the Visible Image of the Invisible God and He Intentionally Modeled a Relational Life of Making Disciples!
- Because All Authority Has Been Given to Jesus and He has Commanded Us to Make Disciples of All Peoples in His Authority!
- Because Jesus is the enthroned universal King, Lord of heaven and earth, who deserves our allegiance and obedience.
- Because Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and He Demonstrated for Us the Way to Make Disciples!
- Because Making Disciples is the Primary Responsibility Jesus Has Explicitly Authorized His Followers to Accomplish and Fulfill!
- Because All Who are Called to Salvation are also Called to Follow Jesus as His Disciple!
- Because the Gospel that Jesus and His Disciples Proclaimed Includes a Clear Call to Spiritual Maturity through Relational Discipleship!
- Because Neither Jesus nor His Disciples Ever Suggested that One Could Receive Total Forgiveness and the Assurance of Heaven and *Choose to Ignore* Following The Life and Teachings of Jesus in this Life!
- Because Only Devoted Discipleship to Christ through the Power of The Holy Spirit Brings Deep Transformation of our Beliefs, Values, World View, Character, Desires, Habits and Actions!
- Because of the Father's Passion for All People from Every Tribe, Language, and Nation to Receive the Message of the Gospel and Become Disciple Makers!
- Because of Our Father's Desire is for all of His Children to be Conformed to the Image of His Son! The Process in which this Occurs is called Discipleship!
- Because Jesus is Worthy of All Glory, Honor, Worship, and Obedience!
- Because God has Entrusted Us with the Treasure of the Gospel to Pass on to Others!
- Because Discipleship is God's Incarnational Blueprint for Kingdom Living Now!
- Because Every Believer is the Visible Image of Jesus and as He was Sent by the Father to Make Disciples, Jesus is Now Sending Us to Continue His Mission!

“But, someone will say,

‘Can I not be saved’ — that is, get into heaven when I die— ‘without any of this?’

You might wish to think about what your life amounts to *before* you die and about what kind of person you are becoming.

Why would you want to spend *eternity* with One whose company you are *not comfortable* to spend a few short days with here on Earth?”

~ Dallas Willard. *The Great Omission*

Widespread transformation of character through wisely disciplined discipleship to Christ can transform our world. It can disarm the structural evils that have always dominated humankind and now threaten to destroy the world.

~ Dallas Willard. *The Spirit of the Disciplines*

Discovery Bible Study

BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

When you meet with your group for Discovery Bible Study, invite everyone to **share one thing they are thankful for and one thing that is a concern or that they are struggling with.** Perhaps there is something that is stressing them out. Eventually, point out to the group that prayer in its simplest form is telling God the things we are **thankful for** and talking with Him about what they are **anxious or worried about.** Transition this interaction from a group share time to an open, interactive prayer time.

REVIEWING THE PAST WEEK: OBEYING THE HOLY SPIRIT

Right after you pray, ask the group to share what **God said to them in their personal time with Him since your last meeting.** Asking this question at the beginning of every meeting encourages group members to have a personal time with God. It also reiterates every member's ability to hear God's voice. It will be exciting to hear how God has spoken to them and will be of great encouragement to the others in the group.

Next, ask them to share any experience of **sharing the previous week's story with someone else.**

Remember, one of the primary goals is for each person to **share God's story with another person in a natural way that spreads the Good News of Jesus throughout their community.**

Finally, ask how they did at **following through on obeying the lesson from last week's story.** This is what sets Discovery Bible Study apart from most discipleship studies – it is *obedience* oriented!

READING AND RETELLING SCRIPTURE

After everyone has a chance to share, have **someone read the Scripture passage out loud** while everyone follows along in his or her Bible. **When they are done, ask for a volunteer to retell the passage in their own words.** When they finish, ask the group to fill in any points they feel were left out. Next, ask for another volunteer to retell the passage again in their own words, hopefully filling in any holes in the story.

Reading, listening, and retelling Scripture is more important than you might think. This pattern allows different learning styles to engage Scripture. Everyone has time to think about the passage and ask the Holy Spirit to speak through God's Word. Retelling the passage allows them to **think through sharing this passage with someone outside the group.** Allowing the group to add to the retelling encourages everyone to think about the main points in the passage. Even though going through the passage multiple times seems repetitive and time consuming, **the process helps develop reproducing disciples.**

DISCOVERY THROUGH QUESTIONS

After your group **retells** the Scripture, you can study the passage. Your discussion must be **question driven.** Questions facilitate the discovery process. Questions allow your group to wrestle with Scripture and grow spiritually. Below are **sample questions** to encourage interaction with Scripture:

- What words or phrases in this passage **captured your attention?** (what surprised you?)
- What in this passage, if anything, would you say **bothered, concerned, or disturbed** you? (What makes you feel **uncomfortable?**) Why?
- **What does this passage tell us/reveal about: God?** (God's character, heart, nature)
- **What does this passage tell us/reveal about: People?** (attitudes, beliefs, character, values, etc.)
- **What are the lessons this passage reveals about: Being a Follower of Jesus?**
- **What is the lesson JUST for ME?** (What does God want ME to OBEY from this passage?)
- **How should I respond to what Jesus is saying to me?** "*I will...*"
- **Who is someone I could tell this week what I've learned from this story?**

Do your best to keep the discussion focused on Scripture. **You, as the facilitator, need to work hard to limit the discussion of extra-Biblical or other Biblical materials.** These materials are helpful, but they don't facilitate interaction with Scripture.

COMMITMENT TO OBEY THE SCRIPTURES

Knowledge of God's Word must translate into **obedience** or it is wasted. This is why we ask the question: **"Since we believe God's Word is true, what is God asking you to change in your life in order to become more like Jesus?"** **"What do you sense God saying to you as it relates to obeying this lesson from the Scriptures?"**

It is crucial to allow time for everyone to **write down what their step(s) of obedience will be *before* they leave**. If time allows, it will be encouraging for the group to have a few share what they feel God is saying to them. If they are already obeying the major lesson in this Scripture, have them share *how* they obey it.

Keep this part of your time focused on specifics. For example, realizing that there is only one God is vital, but that realization needs to become **action**. Therefore, you might encourage them with a follow up question: **"Now that you believe there is only one true God, what do you need to change in your life? What will you do differently?"** Encourage your group to identify specific things to do to obey the text.

After everyone has a chance to reflect upon **how they are going to obey Scripture**, have them **identify someone who needs to hear what God has been saying to them from this passage**. Encourage them to share what they learned with that person.

Before you wrap up, ask the group to **identify people they know who are in need**. Ask the group to **identify ways to meet those needs in the next week**. Finally, close in prayer.

Summary:

1. Share one thing you are **thankful for** and one thing that is **causing you concern** and take those things to God in prayer.
2. Ask the group to **share what God told them through His Word** since the last meeting. Ask them to **share how they were obedient** to the previous week's Scripture and **with whom they might have shared the story**.
3. Have **someone read the Scripture passage** out loud while people follow along in their Bibles.
4. Have **someone else retell the same passage** out loud while the group listens. Allow the group to add or delete any elements to the retelling, if necessary.
5. Have **another person in the group retell the passage again filling in anything that was left out** in his or her own words.
6. Use **discovery questions** to encourage the group to engage the passage.
7. **Challenge the group to obey God's Word**. Have people **write down what he or she is going to do to obey what God has said to them** through the passage over the next week.
8. Have the group **identify people they will share the passage with** during the next week.
9. Have the group **identify people in need and commit to meeting those needs**.
10. Close in prayer.

Who I Am In Christ

I have had the privilege of helping believers resolve their personal and spiritual conflicts and find their freedom in Christ all over the world, and I have observed one common denominator for every defeated Christian. None of them knew who they are in Christ, nor did they understand what it meant to be a child of God. ~ Neil T. Anderson

I Am Accepted:

John 1:12 - I am God's child.

John 15:15 - I am Jesus' friend.

Romans 5:1 - I have been accepted (justified) by God.

1 Corinthians 6:17 - I am united with the Lord and one with Him in spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:20 - I have been bought with a price—I belong to God.

1 Corinthians 12:27 - I am a member of Christ's body, part of His family.

Ephesians 1:1 - I am a saint.

Ephesians 1:5 - I have been adopted as God's child.

Ephesians 2:18 - I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit.

Colossians 1:14 - I have been bought back (redeemed) and forgiven of all my sins.

Colossians 2:10 - I am complete in Christ.

I Am Secure:

Romans 8:1-2 - I am free from punishment (condemnation).

Romans 8:28 - I am assured that all things work together for good.

Romans 8:31-34 - I am free from any condemning charges against me.

Romans 8:35-39 - I cannot be separated from the love of God.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 - I have been established, anointed, and sealed by God.

Philippians 1:6 - I am sure that the good work that God has begun in me will be finished.

Philippians 3:20 - I am a citizen of heaven.

Colossians 3:3 - I have died, and my life is hidden with Christ in God.

2 Timothy 1:7 - I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.

Hebrews 4:16 - I can find grace and mercy in time of need.

1 John 5:18 - I am born of God, and the evil one cannot touch me.

I Am Significant:

Matthew 5:13-14 - I am the salt of the earth and light of the world.

John 15:1,5 - I am a part of the true vine, joined to Christ and able to produce much fruit.

John 15:16 - I have been chosen by Jesus to bear fruit.

Acts 1:8 - I am a personal witness of Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:16 - I am a temple of God.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 - I am at peace with God and a minister of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 6:1 - I am God's co-worker.

Ephesians 2:6 - I am seated with Christ in the heavenlies.

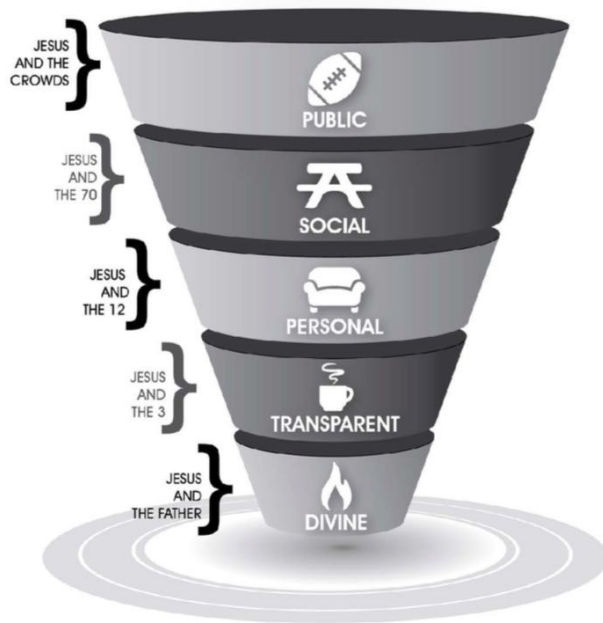
Ephesians 2:10 - I am God's workmanship.

Ephesians 3:12 - I may approach God with freedom and confidence.

Philippians 4:13 - I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Anderson, Neil T. *Becoming a Disciple-Making Church:
A Proven Method for Growing Spiritually Mature Christians* (p. 35).

Five Relational Contexts for Discipleship



Context	Major Expression	Gospel Passages	What Happened
Public	Jesus and the crowds	Matthew 5:1-2 John 6:1-2 Mark 6:34	Sermon on the Mount Feeding of the 5,000 Compassion for the shepherd-less
Social	Jesus and the 70	Luke 10:1 Matthew 9:9-13 Luke 19	The 70 are sent out Eating with Matthew's tax collector friends Party at the home of Zacchaeus
Personal	Jesus and the 12	John 13 Matthew 8:23-27 Mark 8:27-33	Washing the disciples' feet Calming the storm Confession (and rebuke) of Peter
Transparent	Jesus and the 3	Luke 9:28-36 Mark 10:35-45 Matthew 26:36-38	Transfiguration James and John's request Looking for prayer support at Gethsemane
Divine	Jesus and the Father	Mark 1:35 Luke 6:12 John 5:19	Waking early to pray Before calling the Twelve Jesus does only what he sees the Father doing

Figures from *Discipleship That Fits: The Five Kinds of Relationships God Uses to Help Us Grow*; Bobby Harrington; Alex Absalom

These illustrations simply help us to see that there are multiple relational contexts for disciple-making. Jesus spent the majority of his time in the three smallest contexts.

How do these Relational Contexts look in the common Church setting?

- **Public Context: Sunday Worship Celebrations**
- **Social Context: Missional Communities** (These are rare among most churches)
- **Personal Context: Small Groups**
- **Transparent Context: Deepest Friendships, Discipleship Groups, and Marriages.**
- **Divine Context: Your personal journey and relationship with God**

The quality and strength of your relationship with Jesus will have a direct bearing upon the vitality of the other four contexts.

□

As you consider your life and ministry, in which of these contexts do you find yourself most of the time? How are disciples being made and reproduced in this context? Which of these are currently missing in your rhythm of life?

For more insights on these Five Relational Discipleship Contexts, please see: *Discipleship That Fits* by Bobby Harrington and Alex Absalom; A Discipleship.org Resource

4 Phases of Jesus' Discipleship Ministry

1. "COME AND SEE"

An Invitation to **Explore & Investigate** Jesus

6-8 Months

Participants: **John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathaniel** and a few others.

(John 1:35 - 4:46)

The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples. As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, "Look! There is the Lamb of God!" When John's two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus. Jesus looked around and saw them following.

"What do you want?" he asked them. They replied, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?" "Come and see,"

2. "COME AND FOLLOW ME"

An Invitation to **Learn** from Jesus

10-12 Months

Participants: **Simon, Andrew, James, John, Matthew, and others; 70– 120 consistent followers (Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11,27-28)**

*One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers-Simon, also called **Peter**, and **Andrew**-throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. Jesus called out to them, "**Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!**" And they left their nets at once and followed him.*

3. "BE WITH ME"

An Invitation to **Serve** with Jesus

18-20 Months. Jesus concentrated on the Twelve he called to be with him so they could go out and preach.

Participants: **The Twelve Disciples (Mark 3:13-19)**

Afterward Jesus went up on a mountain and called out the ones he wanted to go with him. And they came to him. Then he appointed twelve of them and called them his apostles. They were to accompany him, and he would send them out to preach.

4. "REMAIN IN ME" "GO AND BEAR FRUIT"

An Invitation to **Multiply & Make Disciples Expanding God's Kingdom**

This phase began in the Upper Room and continues into the present.

(John 15:5, 8; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)

Participants: **The 11 Apostles and All who chose to follow Jesus as a Disciple.**

Condensed from Conversion and Discipleship: You Can't Have One Without The Other, Bill Hull

What Biblical Discipleship IS vs. What it is NOT

1. Our motivation for making disciples emerges from our love for Jesus
and our wholehearted devotion to all of his teachings,
not
out of a sense of religious guilt or us earning God's favor!
(Matt. 22:37-40; 28:18-20; John 8:31,32; 14:15, 21-24; 1 Cor. 13:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:14-21)
2. Our core discipleship message is the gospel that Jesus and the New Testament authors
proclaimed: a gospel message that includes a life of discipleship as normal and expected as
followers of Jesus,
not
from a "gospel" that simply asks one to agree with certain biblical truths or that focuses only
upon the forgiveness of one's sins ensuring heaven after death.
(Mark 1:14-18; Luke 9:23-25; 14:25-33; Col. 3:12-17; Titus 2:11-14; 2 Peter 1:3-9)
3. Our pattern or method in which we make disciples must follow and imitate the ministry
model of Jesus as revealed and recorded in the four accounts of the gospel,
not
from some successful contemporary business or leadership model.
(John 1:39; Mark 1:17; 3:13-19; John 15:5,8; 17:4,6,8,18; 20:21; 1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 2:5)
4. Disciple making is rooted in the life, claims, and teachings of Jesus and lived out within a
trusting, authentic and accountable relationship with another person or persons,
not
upon a prescribed local church or denominational program.
(John 8:31,32; Phil. 3:17; 4:9; Thess. 2:7-12)
5. Biblical discipleship reveals that all who are called to a life of salvation in Christ are
also called to follow Jesus as his disciple;
there is *not*
an exception to this biblical expectation.
(Matt 28:18-20 [c.f. John 17:18-21; 20-21]; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-25; 14:25-27;
Phil. 2:12-15; 2 Thess. 2:13-15; Titus 2:11-15; 2 Peter 1:3-9; 1 John 2:3-6)
6. Our goal and aim in making disciples is nothing less than transforming God's redeemed and
restored people into learning how to live and love like Jesus,
not
simply converting them to Christianity as a religion or to become a member of a local church.
(Matt. 10:24-25a; 22:37-40; Luke 6:40; 1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Peter 1:13-18)

What Biblical Discipleship IS vs. What it is NOT (continued)

7. Authentic discipleship as modeled by Jesus is focused upon others – loving and serving the people God has brought into our lives (my family, fellow believers, and others),
it is *not*
merely concerned with our individual relationship with Jesus.
(Mark 10:45; Luke 10:25-37; 19:10; John 13:12-17; 34-35;
Rom. 12:10, 16; 15:7; Phil. 2:3-8; Col. 3:13)
8. Biblical discipleship as modeled by Jesus involves intentionally training people to become obedient, reproducing disciples,
not
simply imparting and transferring biblical information for them to accumulate.
(Matt. 7:24-27; 28:18-20; Luke 6:40,46; John 3:36; Rom 12:16; 1 Cor. 8:1-2; 13:2; James 1:22)
9. The measurement of genuine success for a church must be how many disciples they are making who are progressively growing into Christlike maturity, therefore, reproducing generations of other mature disciples,
not
by the common standards of measuring our attendance, members, baptisms, and cash!
(Acts 2:42-47; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 4:11-13; Colossians 1:28-29; 2 Tim. 2:2)
10. God's desire for all of his children, and the goal of every disciple, is to become like Jesus,
not
simply for us to agree with the facts of his deity.
(Matt. 10:24-25; Luke 6:40; Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 11:1; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 4:13;
Col. 1:28; 3:10; 1 Tim. 4:7b-8; James 2:19; 1 John 2:6)

Ten Disciple Making Affirmations – Discipleship.org

1. The Gospel is our Message.

This Good News is focused on Jesus and his death, burial, and resurrection. All who respond to salvation are also called to discipleship, no exceptions; no excuses (1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Mark 8:34-38). The gospel we preach and believe dictates the kind of disciples we are and the kind of disciples we make. If we attempt to make a Christ-like disciple from a non-discipleship gospel we will fail [*A non-discipleship gospel is one that does not include discipleship as a natural part of the message and expectation*].

2. We are Compelled to Be a Disciple *and* to Make Disciples of Jesus.

We believe Jesus Christ is supreme and worthy of all devotion, worship, and emulation - and disciple making is a natural and necessary life responses to Jesus. With laser focus, it was Jesus himself who made disciples who could make disciples...and then Jesus commanded us to do the same (Matthew 28:16-20, John 20:21).

3. Jesus is Our Model for Life and Ministry.

Jesus showed us how to live life and how to make disciples. We seek to emulate his method and model. As the sinless second Adam, He was man as God intended man to be. He then told us, “do what I have done” (John 14:12) and “walk as I have walked” (I John 2:6). Paul understood this when he said, “imitate me as I imitate Christ” (I Corinthians 11:1). Discipleship demands us to “follow” the resurrected Christ, and “imitate” the priorities and patterns of the incarnate Christ. We prefer to use the expression “Disciple Making” over “discipleship” because the former is closer to the words of the Great Commission and the latter is often mischaracterized (Matthew 28:18-20). We like the expression “Jesus’ model of disciple making,” as a summary of what we do.

4. Love is the Driving Motive.

The Great Commandment *precedes* the Great Commission. Loving God and loving people is the passion behind the priority, the motive behind the mission, the heart behind the hands. Love is the signature card of true disciples...disciple making cannot happen apart from loving caring relationships...both tough and a tender love (I Thessalonians 2). Larger ministries require more relational disciple makers to keep growing. Disciple making is relational and as ministries grow, more relational disciples are needed. “By this will everyone know you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35).

5. Visible Fruit is the Standard of Measure.

God’s agenda for each one of us is that we stay close to him and bear “fruit”, “more fruit” and then ultimately “much fruit” and “so prove to be His disciple” (John 15:8). God transforms our hearts as we “abide in him” and he leads us into lives of love (John 15:17). Jesus modeled the focus of love as he came to seek, save and disciple people (Luke 19:10; 6:40). Jesus masterfully showed how love reproduce disciples...reaching and developing his men and helping them grow from non-believers all the way to reproducing disciple makers (Matthew 28:19-20). There is a natural process of moving people from those who do not know Jesus all the way to becoming mature disciple makers...and Jesus showed the model to us. In short, we haven’t truly made a mature disciple until they are following Jesus model of love and helping make more disciples...this is fruitful multiplication.

6. Holy Spirit Power is the Means.

Disciples cannot be made through fleshly efforts. Jesus, in His humanity, fully acknowledged His dependence upon the Spirit. Disciple making is not just a good strategy...it is a way of life, accomplished through the fruit of the Holy Spirit living through a person's yielded and holy life (2 Corinthians 3:16-17). If Jesus fully depended upon the Holy Spirit's power, how can we not do any less?

7. The Church is the Primary Environment for Disciple Making.

The church is for discipleship and disciples manifest the Kingdom of God to the world (Colossians 1:28-29). When the church reverses this process and attempts to get the world to come to church instead of the church going to the world, you get chaos. Pastoral and ministerial work should be evaluated and rewarded based on how many disciple makers are produced and the kind of people a church sends into the world. Jesus was a man for others. The church, likewise, is for others. Any plan that does not create disciples who live for others is a failure.

8. Equipping Leaders is Essential to a Disciple Making Movement.

All Christians are called to be disciples who grow to help make disciples, using the unique gifts God has given each of us. However, leaders are also called to grow a movement of disciple making...this is called the Church (2 Timothy 2:2). How Jesus built a movement, differs from how Jesus made a disciple. If we are going to create a disciple making movement in North America...it is our conviction **we must train leaders in *how* Jesus built a movement.** This is harder and takes more time... but in the end this will bear fruit that will remain. So practically this means we must develop a team of disciple making leaders (Pastors) with various disciple making best practices (church models) who can continue to fan the flame of disciple making.

9. Definitions are Vitally Important.

- 1) Our definition of **disciple making** is – *helping people to trust and follow Jesus* (Matt. 28:18–20), which includes the whole process from conversion through maturation and multiplication; and
- 2) Our definition of **a disciple** is – *a person who is Following Christ, being Changed by Christ, and is Committed to the Mission of Christ* (Matt. 4:19).

10. Jesus and Scripture are our Foundation.

We believe the 66 books of the Bible are the authoritative, reliable, and ultimate standard for disciple making and life (2 Tim. 3:16- 4:2) and that Jesus, as presented in the Bible and appropriately described by the Apostle's and Nicene Creeds, rightfully deserves our focus and our commitment to a life of full discipleship.

Recommended Reading on Disciple-making and Discipleship

Gallaty, Robby. *Growing Up: How to Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples*, Bloomington, IN: Crossbooks, 2013.

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Some Final Thoughts

**“If you were to ask one question of the church in America,
what would it be?”**

***“What is Your Excuse for Not Obeying
Christ’s Commission to Make Disciples?”***

~ Dr. Robert Coleman, Author of The Master Plan of Evangelism

**“I think that we are coming into a time when many churches and
Christian leaders will be able to say,**

‘It’s all about *discipleship* and *transformation into Christlikeness.*’ ”

~ Dallas Willard

So let me ask you one more time...

Who Are You?

And What Are You Doing Here?

***“Life is too short,
The Gospel of the Kingdom is too valuable,
People are too precious, and
the Consequences are too severe for us to play church
and continue to ignore the Great Commission!”***

Action Steps for Pastors and Leaders

As you gather your teams together to debrief what you have experienced and how to implement what you've learned you might find the following sample questions helpful to guide you through the process:

1. First of all, would the majority of the people in your church or mission organization be able to explain your intentional strategy for making disciples? Do you have one currently in place? Is it working? Is it truly multiplying disciple-makers?
2. How would you describe the core message of this training?
3. What questions arose from this training that you are still wrestling with?
4. What was the biggest personal challenge you encountered?
5. What were some of the new insights you discovered?
6. How might you apply any of these insights to your life and ministry context?
7. What were two or three of the most insightful quotes?
8. What was your biggest takeaway from the training?
9. **What** are some intentional next steps you can take to build upon and practice what you have learned? **Who** will join you? **When** will you begin these steps?