

“Strong Relationships”

1 Thessalonians 2:8

December 10, 2017

VIDEO: *Karate Kid* (cf. John 8:31)

‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.’

BIG IDEA: **Disciple-making requires serious, purposeful relationships for your own growth & the growth of others.**

“Christians often fall into the trap of believing that casual relationships can produce meaningful discipleship.” - DisciplesPath

The LORD’s divine design has always included discipleship through loving leadership. - JDP

T/S: Last week we saw this via Paul with Timothy (1 & 2)

PREVIEW:

- I. Love encapsulates true, biblical discipleship
- II. Koinonia is the by-product of biblical discipleship
- III. Gospel truth is the content of biblical discipleship
- IV. God’s glory is the purpose of biblical discipleship
- V. Homothoomadon is the fruit of biblical discipleship

TEXT: [1 Thessalonians 2:8](#)

So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

I. [LOVE encapsulates true, biblical discipleship](#)

So, being affectionately desirous of you,

“Biblical, Christ-like discipleship is nothing more, nor anything less than, the pursuit of godliness, in and through loving, missional relationships.” - JDP

T/S: *“Discipleship relationships work best when everyone involved understands their roles in the disciple making process. Without such an understanding, our attempts at discipleship often deteriorate into just another friendship with no eternal value.” - DisciplesPath*

II. Koinonia is the by-product of biblical discipleship

So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only...

Truth, love, time & transparency... coupled with purpose, passion, repentance... AND faithful obedience, are all miraculously combined to make the mortar of missional relationships. - JDP

VIDEO: *Randy Pope*

III. Gospel truth is the content of biblical discipleship

So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the GOSPEL

“It’s not so much that God’s Church has a mission... as it is... God’s mission has a Church.” – Ed Stetzer

VIDEO: *David Platt – “Why People Don’t Disciple”*

T/S: **C.S. Lewis:** *“The Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became man for no other purpose.”*

IV. God’s glory is the purpose of biblical discipleship

So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of GOD

QUESTION: **Bill Hull**

How do we begin to transform this congregation, that is largely made up of spectators & consumers, led by a minister... into a church filled with ministers... that is led by a pastor.

ANSWER: *We need to go back to the Bible & the words, will, & ways of Jesus.*

VIDEO: *David Platt – “The Secret*

V. Homothoomadon is the mission of biblical disciples

So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our very LIVES,

Pastor Jon Tyson

“Our culture is doing an amazing job of discipling people in the church... By in large, people are:

Moving from faith to doubt...

Moving from love to insecurity...

Moving from community to individualism...

Moving from contributing to consuming...

Moving from rest to exhaustion.

Such a church... one defined by doubt, insecurity, individualism, consumerism, & exhaustion will-not & CANNOT accomplish that which Christ commissioned.”

VIDEO: Discipleship.org – Jeff Vander

CLOSE:

“BECAUSE you had become very dear to us.”

***“We must not make cheap what cost God
EVERYTHING!” – D. Bonhoeffer***

We are like:

- **Nehemiah's** wall-builders (shovel & spear)
- **Ezekiel's** wall-walkers (detect & protect)
- **Cripple** whose friends tore thru the roof to lower him...

How far are you willing to go?

WHY?

(cf. John 3:16 & John 20:21)

VIDEO: *Francis Chan – “Advice For Leaders”*

1 Corinthians 4:14-17!

***14** I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. **15** For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. **16** I urge you, then, be imitators of me. **17** That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.*

Let's Pray!

Research Notes:

Sin leads to selfishness... Seldom is sin's selfishness seen more directly than when it comes to human relationships...

Let me show you what I mean...

What do you want out of your relationships?

Do you want strong, empowered, defining relationships?

- It depends on the relationship... right?
- Examples:
 - Relationship to a spouse/family member...
 - Relationship to a terrorist/evil murderer...

Most people want strong relationships below them... and loose, less demanding relationships above them.

Think about it...

We prefer to "tell" rather than be "told."

We like to "pick" rather than be picked...

We like to look down AT people vs. up TO people...

We like things our way a lot more than another way...

We like to get vs. give...

Per our pride... We even like to help vs. be helped...

If we're not careful, our pride will poison our relationships.

Your value & validation as a Christian disciple-maker hinges on:

1. Your Christ
2. Your Christ-likeness
3. Your Christian-understanding
4. Your Christ-like, spiritual-fruit bearing
5. Your Christ-like, Spirit-led, faithful-obedience

The Detection & Selection Process:

1. CHOOSE..... F.A.T. people
 - a. Faithful
 - b. Available
 - c. Teachable
2. LOSE..... S.A.D. people
 - a. Sour-Skeptics
 - b. Antagonists
 - c. Deceitful

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 (ESV)

¹ Paul, Silvanus (Silas), and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians, in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

² We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers,

³ remembering before our God and Father your

work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,

⁵ because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

⁶ And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

⁷ so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

⁸ For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.

⁹ For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 2:1-20 (ESV)

¹ For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain.

² But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict.

³ For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive,

⁴ but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.

⁵ For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness.

⁶ Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ.

⁷ But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.

⁸ So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

⁹ For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden

to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

¹⁰ You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers.

¹¹ For you know how, like a father with his children,
¹² we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

¹³ And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

¹⁴ For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews,

¹⁵ who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind

¹⁶ by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them at last!

¹⁷ But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face,

¹⁸ because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us.

¹⁹ For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?

²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

“If we really understood the kingdom dynamics and the concentrated theology/worldview that the shema conveys, then we would not have to use the term “missional” at all. Mission is implied in what it means to love God with all that we are and love our neighbor as ourselves. True and authentic worship of the One God requires that I offer my world back to Him in response to His grace and lordship. But when you think about it, mission is also about offering my world back to God. As a result, discipleship, too, involves me “offering my world back to God”; they (worship, mission, discipleship) are simply dimensionally different aspects of the same phenomenon. We should not have to qualify it with adjectives to somehow make sense of different types of discipleship. To recover discipleship means to recover true worship and mission as well.”

Discipleship must take us beyond... the many “churchly” admirers of Jesus into true followers of Jesus. Admirers of Jesus are hard to motivate and need to be constantly entertained; only real followers of Jesus will go the distance and make a lasting impact on the world.

- Alan Hirsch

Discipleship According to the Scriptures

9Marks Ministry

By Garrett Kell

Garrett Kell is the lead pastor of Del Ray Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia

Article

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My earliest memories revolve around fishing trips with my father. He taught me how to bait a hook, cast a line, and land

a catfish without getting stabbed to death. But fishing wasn't all I learned. I learned about my father. I learned how he walked, how he talked, how he joked, how he prayed, how he spoke to others, and how he always thought about my mother on the drive home.

More than fishing, I learned about being a man.

To this day, the lessons I learned from my dad impact the way I live and love others. What happened in my time with my father was a form of discipleship. He led and I followed.

What is biblical discipleship? Of all the questions Christians need to wrestle with, this is one of the most important. Being disciples of Jesus gets to the very core of who we are and what we should be doing with our lives.

In this article I suggest that discipleship—helping others follow Jesus—flows directly from being a disciple of Jesus. Disciples are called to follow Christ, and following him means helping others follow him.

Are you a disciple that makes disciples?

DISCIPLES FOLLOW JESUS

When we encounter Jesus, we meet a man who calls us to come and die (Mk. 8:34-35). And he calls us to follow him and learn from him (Mt. 4:19, 11:29). It doesn't matter whether we're smart or stupid, rich or poor, young or old,

Asian, African, or American. The only requirement is that we repent of rebelling against our Creator and cling to him through faith (Mk. 1:15; 1 Thess. 1:9). If we do this, we're promised forgiveness of our sins and reconciliation to God (Col. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:17-21). Jesus calls us to come and die so that we might live.

Those who follow Jesus by faith are known as his disciples. Some suggest that disciples are the "super Christians" who are gettin' it done for Jesus, while Christians are just "normal believers." Scripture, however, offers no support for this distinction. (See, for example, Mt. 10:38, 16:24-28; Mk. 8:34; Lk. 9:23, 57-62; Jn. 10:27, 12:25-26). We are either following Jesus or we aren't; there is no middle ground (Mt. 12:30).

DISCIPLES IMITATE AND REPLICATE JESUS

At the heart of following Jesus is Jesus' call to imitate him and replicate him. As disciples, we are called to imitate Jesus' love (Jn. 13:34), his mission (Mt. 4:19), his humility (Phil. 2:5), his service (Jn. 13:14), his suffering (1 Pt. 2:21) and his obedience to the Father (1 Jn. 2:3-6). Since he is our teacher, we are to learn from him and strive in the power of the Holy Spirit to become like him (Lk. 6:40). This growth in Christ-likeness is a lifelong endeavor that is fueled by the hopeful expectation that one day we will see him face to face (1 Jn. 3:2-3).

DISCIPLES HELP OTHERS FOLLOW JESUS

As we follow our Lord, we quickly learn that part of imitation is replication. Having a personal relationship with Jesus is magnificent, but it is incomplete if it ends with us. Part of being his follower is to intentionally help others learn from him and become more like him. As a friend of mine says, “If you aren’t helping other people follow Jesus, I don’t know what you mean when you say you’re following Jesus.” To be his follower is to help others follow him.

Being a disciple that makes disciples happens in two particular ways. First, we’re called to evangelize. Evangelism is telling people who don’t follow Jesus what it means to follow him. We do this by proclaiming and portraying the gospel in our neighborhood and among the nations (Mt. 28:19-20). We must never forget that God has placed us in the families, workplaces, and circles of friends that we are in so that we can proclaim the gospel of grace to those who are destined to hell apart from Christ. We must help people learn how to begin to follow Jesus.

The second aspect of making disciples is helping other believers grow in Christ-likeness. Jesus has designed his church to be a body (1 Cor. 12), a kingdom of citizens and a family who actively build each other up into the fullness of Christ (Eph. 2:19; 4:13, 29). We are called to instruct each other about Christ (Rom. 15:14) and to imitate others who are following Christ (1 Cor. 4:16, 11:1; 2 Thess. 3:7, 9). As

disciples, we are to intentionally pour into other disciples so they can pour into still others (2 Tim. 2:1-2).

DISCIPLES INTENTIONALLY BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Discipleship does not just happen. We need to be intentional about cultivating deep, honest relationships in which we do spiritual good to other Christians. While we can have discipleship relationships anywhere, the most natural place for them to develop is in the community of the local church. In the church Christians are commanded to meet together regularly, spur each other on in Christ-likeness, and protect each other against sin (Heb. 3:12-13; 10:24-25).

The discipleship relationships that spring out of this type of committed community should be both structured and spontaneous. When we study the life of Jesus, we see that he formally taught his disciples (Mt. 5-7; Mk. 10:1) while also allowing them to observe his obedience to God as they lived life together (Jn 4:27; Lk. 22:39-56).

In the same way, some of our discipleship relationships should be structured. Maybe two friends decide to read a chapter from the Gospel of John and then discuss it over coffee or a workout at the gym. Maybe two businessmen read a chapter each week from a Christian book and then talk about it on a Saturday walk through the neighborhood with their kids. Maybe two couples do a date night together once a month and talk about what the Bible says about marriage.

Maybe a godly older lady has a younger single woman over to her home on Tuesday afternoon to pray and study a Christian biography. Maybe a mom spends time at the park with other moms each week. Regardless of the format, some of our discipleship should involve scheduled times of reading, praying, confessing, encouraging, and challenging each other to become more like Christ.

Discipleship can also be spontaneous. Maybe friends go to a movie together and then grab ice cream afterwards to compare the movie's message to what the Bible says. Maybe a father and a son sit on the porch and reflect on God's glory being displayed in a sunset. Maybe you invite visitors from church over for lunch and ask everyone how they came to know Jesus.

We always need to be intentional, but we don't always need to be structured. In fact, Deuteronomy 6 shows us that discipleship happens "when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise" (v. 7). Every moment presents an opportunity to discuss who God is and what he's doing. Since we are always following Jesus, we always have the opportunity to help others follow him as well.

DISCIPLES DEPEND UPON GRACE

While it is true that a disciple of Jesus ought to help others follow Jesus, we must always remember that apart from the

sustaining and empowering grace of God we can do nothing (Jn. 15:5). Whether you're a pastor, a plumber, a policeman, or a stay at home parent, you never graduate from your need for God's grace.

As we follow Christ and help others follow him, we're constantly made aware that we need grace. We fail. We sin. We struggle. But thankfully, God's grace abounds to his children. This is good news as we seek to follow Jesus together and daily be transformed into his glorious image (2 Cor. 3:18). May we faithfully follow Christ and help others to do the same until we see his face. Come soon, Lord Jesus!

What Defines a Christian Disciple?

By DiscipleshipDefined.com

John 8:31

Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.'

Introduction

While Webster's Dictionary describes a disciple as "a pupil or follower of any teacher or school of religion, learning, art, etc," a *Christian disciple* follows **Jesus**. A Christian disciple is one who loves God with everything one has. A

Christian disciple, by God's grace, becomes more and more like Christ through a life of faith and obedience.

Life Example

Have you ever met someone who claimed to be something, but acted another way? Have you ever encountered someone who contradicted what they said they believed? **Think of a person who claims to be a huge fan of a certain sports team, but then turns on the team when they lose several games in a row.** Think of a more serious example. We often hear stories of women who are abused by men who claim to love them. **If one's actions contradict one's words, which is true? In Christ's eyes, it is our actions that speak to what we believe.** So, in following Him, we must hold to His teachings in our daily lives.

When we look at the New Testament Gospels, we see that those who followed Jesus truly were His disciples. Because of their love for Christ, many left their jobs, homes, and security to walk with Him as He ministered to people throughout Palestine. They had the benefit of walking with Christ in the flesh.

So, what does it look like now – with Christ risen and the Holy Spirit dwelling within us – to be Jesus' disciple?

Characteristics of a Christian disciple:

- 1. A true disciple of the Jesus worships God.** If you are a new creation in Christ, you are someone who brings glory to God and recognizes His honor.
- 2. A disciple must be confident in the efficacy of Christ's death and resurrection for his salvation.** He must know that he is a child of God and Christ dwells within him.¹
- 3. A disciple walks in the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit is responsible for everything that happens in the life of a believer—his new birth, daily walk, understanding of Scripture, prayer, etc. He produces the fruit of the Spirit in us, which enables us to live holy lives and witness for Christ.²
- 4. A disciple demonstrates love for God, neighbor, fellow disciples, and enemies.** Jesus commands us to love God with every fiber of our being and to love our neighbors as ourselves.³
- 5. A disciple is one who knows how to read, study, memorize, and meditate upon the Word of God, to store its truths in his heart.** It is impossible to walk in the fullness of God's Holy Spirit without understanding God's Word. The reverse is also true: you cannot understand God's Word without the Holy Spirit.⁴
- 6. A true disciple of Jesus is a man or woman of prayer.** Jesus models throughout Scripture that

communicating with God is one of the most important things in a Christian's life. He models that those who are children of God seek the Father.⁵

7. **A disciple is one who obeys the commands of God in a lifestyle that honors Christ.**⁶
8. **A disciple is one who trusts God and lives a life of faith.** Scripture reminds us that, “without faith it is impossible to please God.”⁷
9. **A disciple understands God's grace.** God loves us unconditionally, whether we obey Him or not. This is the opposite of legalism – a heretic way of thinking that urges us to try to obey God's laws in our own wisdom, strength, and power.⁸
10. **A disciple is one who witnesses for Christ as a way of life.** If you love Jesus, you are spurred on to tell people about Him, testifying to what He has done in your life.

Application Questions

1. What are some characteristics of a true Christian disciple you are noticing in your own life?
2. What are some characteristics of a true Christian disciple that you struggle with? Have you given that over to the Lord?

Memory Verses

Luke 14:27

John 8:31

John 13:35

How does this study reinforce your belief in the gospel?

References

1. 1 John 5:13
2. Galatians 5:22-25
3. Mark 12:30-31; Matthew 5:43-48
4. Psalm 119

5. 1 Thessalonians 5:17
6. James 1:22-25
7. Hebrews 11:6
8. Romans 5:1
9. Matthew 5:16

Biblical Basis for Discipleship

By DiscipleshipDefined.com

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the

name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Jesus' Command

After Jesus' resurrection, “all authority was entrusted to me” came to fruition. He is not waiting passively in heaven for His glorious arrival as king but already He is exercising His lordship. The literal translation is a command: “You disciple.” The word disciple translates as “to become a learner or pupil.”¹ Grammatically, Matthew uses the aorist active imperative tense. This simply means an action that is absolutely required and occurring without end. It is surrounded by three participles (Go, Baptize, and Teach). The first participle ‘going/traveling’ is one of attendant circumstance. It is used to communicate an action that is equally as important as the finite verb ‘Disciple.’ In this respect, the verb is not dependent, and is best translated “Go and Make.” Therefore in Matthew’s mind, Go is understood as not only a nonnegotiable but an assumed action that is always linked to the command ‘Disciple.’² (Baptizing) and (Teaching) are participles of means. Jesus is communicating how the action of the finite verb is accomplished. By using ‘Baptizing’ Jesus is describing the symbolic gesture of being initiated into His fold. The gospel is the catalyst for that initiation and thus the most relevant message that a person can receive in this life³. The focus is witnessing, so the task of baptizing in this text is mainly evangelistic in nature.

'Teaching' refers to catechesis, which means the process of educating through a method of active questioning and response. By teaching what Jesus taught, the church becomes an extension of His ministry⁴. In all, the command to disciple finds its fulfillment in evangelism and education. The discipleship characteristics as commanded by Jesus appear not only in this commission, but throughout the Gospels.⁵

Jesus' Model

Discipleship was Jesus' method of winning the world to Himself. In fact, Jesus converted very few people in His earth ministry in a clear-cut way. He literally staked His whole ministry on twelve men. As popular as He was during His earthly ministry, Jesus did not focus on the momentary applause of men but quietly poured His life in those who would multiply. Jesus was not trying to impress the crowd, but usher in a kingdom. Christ expects His followers to be fruitful,⁶ but often we are not without external motivation and accountability.⁷

Jesus knew that He would have to equip the saints to be able to lead the multitudes. This is what we need in our churches. It is safe to say that discipleship was foundational to Jesus' ministry.

Early Church Model

Although not in a methodical plan as what we are accustomed to today, the apostles of the early church believed the command of Jesus was indeed serious. One

clear example is the life that Paul modeled as shown most beautifully in the exhortation given in 2 Tim. 2:2. Paul understood it was important that Jesus sent him to do all that He had commanded. In the same way, he was sending Timothy. While being sent, Timothy is to continue the legacy by sending out faithful men out who would send others. This is what Jesus commanded Paul and this was his command to Timothy. The command is also extended to us today.

We have seen that Jesus calls His followers to reproduce the example of training disciples to continue the mission of actively teaching and sharing the gospel. There are practical examples of what this looks like through Jesus' ministry and Paul's relationship with Timothy to name a few. This will require long term investment but can create a deeply affecting ministry. So it appears that the call to discipleship is extended to the entire body of Christ and is no less relevant today than when it was first given.

Discipleship is an essential element of our Lord's ministry and command to believers. It should be a significant component in the body of Christ both theoretically and practically.

What Is Discipleship?

Discipleship is a popular word, often used vaguely and ambiguously. It's actually quite simple. Discipleship is the relationship between a teacher (discipler) and student (disciple). Many churches and Christian groups around the world do elements of discipleship, but rarely engage in holistic discipleship as modeled by Christ.

Discipleship is **not** fulfilled by any of the following items on their own:

- Fellowship
- Accountability
- Evangelizing and making converts
- Bible study
- Training seminars
- Listening to sermons
- Hanging out with an older believer

Remember, these are elements of discipleship, not equivalents of discipleship. They are good and godly, but they lack the individual attention, growth and accountability that Jesus modeled.

By looking at Jesus' ministry and the early church, we see that to holistic discipleship involves someone training their disciple in **Word, Relationship, and Ministry**.

Word

Teaching disciples to obey all that Christ commanded and modeled throughout the Scriptures.

- [Luke 11:28](#)
- [Mark 4:14-20](#)
- [2 Tim 3:16-17](#)
- [John 5:38](#)

Jesus clearly showed His disciples the importance and use of the Scriptures, both in His own personal devotion

and in winning others to Himself. Learning and obeying Scripture is essential for one's growth as a disciple of Christ. Mack Avenue Community Church expects its leaders to love God's Word and to impart this love to their disciples.

Relationship

Building relationships that feature love, commitment, authenticity, vulnerability, accountability, and intentionality.

- [Matthew 9:9](#)
- [John 1:43, 11:54](#)
- [1 Thessalonians 2:8](#)

Having called His men, Jesus made a practice of spending time with them. This was the essence of His training program—letting His disciples follow Him. Knowledge of Christ was gained by association before it was understood by explanation.⁸ He ate with His disciples, slept near them, and talked with them for most of His active ministry.

Although there is no command to commit to such a level, it seems convincing that Jesus shows how important relationship development is to growing a disciple. If this does not happen, the disciple may feel like a project and not a person. The person should know he is loved, not only by Christ, but also by their discipler.

Ministry

Training disciples in service and evangelism. Service is any work done with the motivation to honor Jesus. This could be buying a cup of coffee for a coworker, or caring for those who have been marginalized by society and affected by injustice, making provisions for those who are

hurting spiritually and physically. Evangelism is spreading the gospel by public preaching or personal witness.

- Matthew 24:14
- 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

Jesus never asked anyone to do or be anything which first He had not demonstrated in His own life. His desire was to get the disciples into a vital experience with God. It is important that we realize that these early disciples really did not do much other than watch Jesus work for at least a year. However, the vision was kept before them by His activity. The model has been set for us. The mission of equipping us as believers to communicate our faith to the world was a huge component of discipleship in Jesus' approach. Word, Relationship and Ministry work together to holistically model discipleship principles taught by Jesus. The goal of discipleship is to develop healthy believers that walk by faith, communicate their faith, and multiply their faith.

How to Choose a Disciple

Christ modeled the principle that selection of disciples is key to discipleship. He demonstrated that the multitudes could be won if they were just given Spirit-filled leaders to follow. We have to be discerning so that, like Paul following Jesus' model, we will choose disciples who will not waste our time and but will be faithful stewards to what has been entrusted to them.

- 2 Timothy 2:2

We should look for three main qualities in a disciple:

1. **Faithful.** Confidence that what you are entrusting to the person will be in good hands.

2. **Available.** It is hard to train someone who is not around. Therefore, a potential disciple must show a willingness to be around you. He or she must model commitment.
3. **Teachable.** It is impossible to teach someone who thinks they know everything and are not receptive to instruction or rebuke. Just as Jesus modeled, we are not to waste the stewardship of our lives with know-it-alls.⁹

When Choosing a Disciple:

1. Cast vision for the mandate of discipleship. This is done by teaching what it means to be discipled and helping them understand the expectations.
2. Make it clear that you are the leader of the group you are calling them to. You are their servant and leader.
3. Discuss with the person the requirements of being Faithful, Available, Teachable.
4. The person must be willing to eventually disciple others – to follow the vision.
5. The person must be willing adhere to your requirements i.e. One on One times, Bible Study time etc.

Application Questions

1. What are the primary components of discipleship?
2. Have you built conviction on the metrics of discipleship?
3. What could hinder a discipleship relationship from being God-honoring?

4. What traits are we supposed to look for in potential disciples?

Memory Verses

Matthew 28:18-20

2 Tim 2:2

How does this study reinforce your belief in the gospel?

References

1. Michael J. Anthony, *Introducing Christian Education: Foundations for the Twenty-first Century*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2001), 52.
2. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond The Basics*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House), 641..
3. W.D. Davies, and Dale C. Allison, *The International Critical Commentary: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991).
4. Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:21
5. John 15:16
6. Anthony, 55.
7. Luke 8:10
8. Matthew 9:12; Proverbs 8:13

*** Note: this message is NOT some fringe, hyper-niched ministry-message... No. Fulfilling the Great Commission &

becoming a great Church is the proof & fruit of one's life being committed to fulfilling the Great Commandments!

- JDP

What would you be willing to do?

How far would you be willing to go?

- 4 friends & a thatch roof...

Million dollar question behind both is WHY?

Example: Marriage/Divorce in our culture.

Categories of Relationships:

1. Trinitarian (Father, Son, Spirit)
2. Messianic (Creator-Christ to His Created)
3. Christian (Vertical, Horizontal, Missional)
4. Worldly (Void of the Spirit & supernatural)
5. Wicked (Intentionally & supernaturally evil)

Types of Relationships:

1. Formal/Informal
2. Functional/Fixed
3. Fun/Friendly
4. Family/Familiarity
5. Final/Forever

Attributes/Characteristics Continuum of Relationships

1. Truth/Lies

2. Love/Hate
3. God/Fraud
4. Supernatural/Superficial
5. Selfless/Selfish
6. Committed/Calculated
7. For-us/Against-us
8. Building-up/Tearing-down
9. Trustworthy/Back-stabbing
10. Authentic/Counterfeit
11. Transparent/Manipulative
12. Missional/Marginal
13. Global/social
14. Get-to/Have-to
15. Discipling/Destroying
16. Christ-like/Culture-like
17. Winning/Losing
18. Giving/Taking
19. Helping/Hurting
20. Word-shaped/World-based
21. Witnessing/Wandering
22. Well-done/Un-done
23. Sheep & Shepherds vs. Goats & Wolves
24. Virtuous/Venomous
25. Holistic Worship/Hollow Lip-service
26. Flowing-fruit/Phony-fruit
27. Obedience/Disobedience (balance?)
28. Surrender/"Control"
29. Submissive/Subversive
30. LORDship/Blasphemous
31. Devoted/Divided

Blessings & Benefits of Relationships:

1. Christ & Christ-likeness
2. Christ's Love Received & Shared
3. Eternal life & Eternal living
4. BE-ing poured into & BE-ing poured out from
5. Missional Koinonia AND Homothoomadon!
 - a. One DEFINER
 - b. One DEFINITION
 - c. One (narrow) PATH
 - d. One BODY
 - e. One FAMILY
 - f. One CHURCH
 - g. One LOVE
 - h. One MISSION
 - i. One PRAYER
 - j. One WAR
 - k. One GOAL
 - l. One MEANS
 - m. One MESSAGE
 - n. One MESSIAH
 - o. One STANDARD
 - p. One BLUEPRINT
 - q. One RESPONSE

Relationship Costs & Contributions

1. Initiation & Creation
2. Christ & Crucifixion

3. Christ-like caring & Crucifixion of flesh
4. Cross-carrying & Christ-like citizenship
5. Championing & Completing Christ's Great Commission

Word study on "devoted" in Acts 2:42...

See the Macedonian's sacrificial, joyful, giving...

See also the relational role of Church Discipline (both/&)

- Matthew 18
- 1st John!!!!
- Judas
- Demas
- Alexander

DNA = our internal wiring dictates our traits (but not our behavior)

We are like:

- Nehemiah's wall-builders (shovel & spear)
- Ezekiel's wall-walkers (detect & protect)

Truth, love, time & transparency, coupled with purpose, passion, repentance... AND faithful obedience are miraculously combined to make the mortar of missional relationships. - JDP

We fight fire with living Water! - JDP

12“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **13**Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.**14**You are my friends if you do what I command you.**15**No longer do I call you servants,^a for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. **16**You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. **17**These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

The Hatred of the World

“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. **19**If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. **20**Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. **21**But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.

Word study:

- Love (see above)
- Obey (put in application to/with love)
- Perseverance = obedience over time
- Ekklesia = supernaturally saved, set apart, sent

- Church as "the body" - "God's family"
- Koinonia
- Homothoomadon
- Abide (relate "abide" to relation of "branches")
- Mission/Purpose (relate affect on relationships)
 - > Red-rover (never let go)
 - > Rangers (never desert, go A.W.O.L., spy...)
 - > Regenerate & Redeemed (work against, 2Ti)
- Brothers
 - > Brothers to Joseph vs Joseph to brothers
 - > Ditto with Cain & Abel
 - > Ditto Judas vs Peter...
 - > Ditto Judas vs John... (see 1st John)

See the POTENTIAL of Christian relationships & discipleship...

A. Personal

B. Pod

1. Paul
2. Barnabas
3. Timothy

C. People

1. Lost

1. Reach-out to Goats
 1. Invitation to all
 2. Investing in few (P.o.P.)
2. Watch-out for Wolves
 1. Attacking you
 2. Attacking others

3. Attacking Church

2. Found

1. Worship
2. Discipleship
3. Fellowship

- > Persons of peace (P.o.P.)
- > Phillip & eunuch (Acts 8:26-40)

Explain how to assess & approach P.o.P.'s

Use RESCUE highlights...

- Lawless' definition of evangelism
- Biblical images of evangelism (relationships)
 - > Witness
 - > Fishers
 - > Ministers of reconciliation
- BEing biblical
 - > Salt & Light
 - > Aroma of Christ
 - > Ambassadors
- DOing:
 - > Bearing fruit
 - > Making disciples
 - > Interceding for others
- TELLing
 - > Proclaiming
 - > Declaring
 - > Teaching & Preaching

- > Exalting
- DEPENDING on...
 - > Father
 - > Son
 - > Spirit

- "Getting Started" reason for training...
- Styles of relational dynamics...
- Encouraging considerations...
- Jesus related to everyone (least of these)
- "Care Enough To Confront" (6 steps/stages)

Think about categories & common relationships:

- Marriage
- Siblings
- Extended family
- Military (team)
- Sports team
- Work relations (vertical & horizontal)
- Friends

Mike Waters' quote:

"Friends are nothing more than people you enjoy USING more than others."

Relationships In Discipleship (require & reflect)

VERTICAL

HORIZONTAL

MISSIONAL

QT: JDP's definition of a Christian "Disciple"

"A disciple is a miraculous, Christ-like, work-in-progress."

QT: JDP's definition of Christian "Discipleship"

"Christian discipleship is: the faithfully-obedient endeavors of 'miraculous, Christ-like, works-in-progress,' (a.k.a. Christian disciples), engaged in 'Finding the Lost & Growing the Found,' into family-members, who are in-turn, committed to making disciples, who make disciples, who make disciples... ALL by God's grace & for God's glory."

QT: *"Biblical, Christ-like discipleship is nothing more, nor anything less than, the pursuit of godliness, in and through missional relationships."* - JDP

Speak to churches the way Jesus spoke to churches...
(Beatitudes & Sermon on the Mount, Rev. 2&3.... plus
Temple cleaning)

God's design = order & leaders

Ask the church to pray through their sense of short & long
term calling... and give it to me. Then... ask each person
to share their response with their "pod."

We are aiming at disciples vs decisions...

I don't want you to feel bad "about you." BUT, I pray that
the LORD will break your heart for those who are dying &
going to hell without Christ. - JDP

Discipleship = a call to all-in!

Bill Hull: "What Is A Disciple?"

A disciple is the only kind of person we have been
authorized to be & make...

If I were a shoe manufacturer and went out on the
mfg floor and found my workers making anything
other than shoes.... I'd be upset!

When I was a young pastor, I began to realize that
people came to church for a number of reasons...

Some came because the church building was close to their house, some came because they liked the music, some came because of the children's program, some came because their family members came... or they liked the idea that they could play centerfield on the church softball team... Over and over again, it became clear that they were NOT coming to learn how, or to actually BECOME more like Jesus Christ.

Million dollar question....

How do we begin to transform this congregation, that is largely made up of spectators & consumers, led by a minister... into a church filled with ministers... that is led by a pastor.

ANSWER: We need to go back to the Bible & the words, will, & ways of Jesus.

STOP thinking about biblical disciples as “super” Christians...

C.S. Lewis: “The Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the

cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became man for no other purpose.”

5 Characteristics of a Disciple:

Intro:

John 15:1-6 (Abiding, Obeying, Fruitful)

Don't waste your life...

Self-directed living...

Eating off the Christian “buffet”

“Licking the earth” – Blaise Pascal

(1) John 15:7

A disciple is someone **in conversation** with Christ **through His Word & prayer**.

“Put down you notebook & pen... and pick up your knife and fork... and CONSUME the Word of God.” – Eugene Peterson

We need to become “self feeding”

(2) John 15:8

A disciple **reveals Christ**

“...produce MUCH fruit”

“...this PROVES you are My disciples”

“...this brings the Father GLORY”

(3) John 15:9-10

A disciple **loves** God **through obedience**

**“We must not make cheap
what cost God EVERYTHING!”**

– D. Bonhoeffer

(4) John 15:11

A disciple has **JOY**

(5) John 15:12-14

A disciple **LOVES as Christ loves**

Agape love is the bottom line on discipleship

“as Christ loves” is the KEY!!!

Christ's love doesn't quit...

Christ's love is unconditional...

Christ's love is NOT performance based...

AGAPE love & lovers can & will change the world

AGAPE love & lovers bring God glory!

You will make & reproduce yourself...NOT your ideals! – JDP

Pastor Jon Tyson:

“Our culture is doing an amazing job of discipling people in the church... By in large, people are:

Moving from faith to doubt...

Moving from love to insecurity...

Moving from community to individualism...

Moving from contributing to consuming...

Moving from rest to exhaustion.

Such a church... one defined by doubt, insecurity, individualism, consumerism, & exhaustion will-not & CANNOT accomplish that which Christ commissioned.”

The more abundantly the benefits of civilization come streaming our way, the emptier our lives become. With all its wealth & power, it only shows that the human heart, in which God has put eternity, is so huge that all the world is too small to satisfy it.” -

Herman Bavinck

8 Core Values of the BEST Christian Leaders:

(per a 2 year global study by Asbury Theological Seminary)

1. Intimacy with God
2. Passion for the harvest
3. Visionary leadership
4. Culturally relevant evangelism
5. Multiplication of leaders
6. Faithful stewardship
7. Family priorities
8. Integrity

“It’s not so much that God’s Church has a mission... as it is... God’s mission has a Church.” – Ed Stetzer

THE mission is both/and... the sharing AND showing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. John 20:21).

Mark 9:42 is a warning for those who thwart the Church!

CLOSE with 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 & 14-17!