

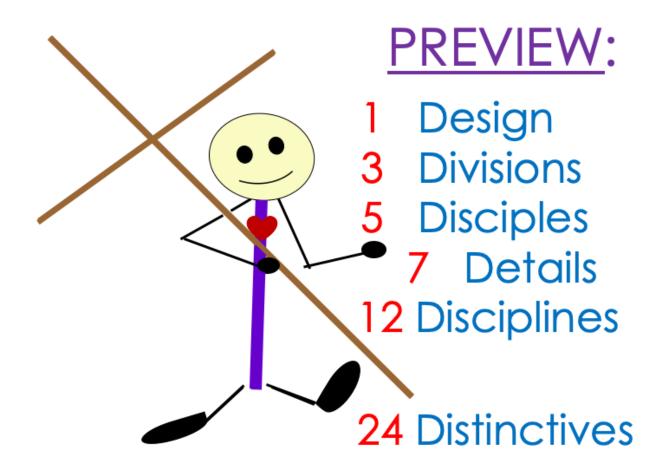
# The FLOW

Adult CURRICULUM

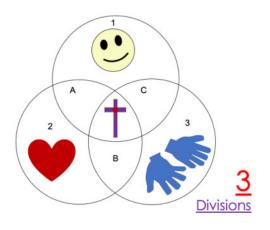
#41
Equipping The Saints
Ephesians 4:12

(Come And See Christianity book pages 104)

# The FLOW



SECTION SIX: 12 Disciplines



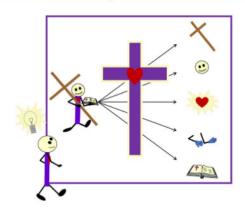


The Disciple's "Hands" put into action the truth & love of God's Word, God's will, & God's ways.

In short, when each Christian's Head, Heart, & Hands are united in purpose & power, the family of God is living as the Body of Christ!

## 24 Family Distinctives:





# 24 DISTINCTIVES:

The "distinctives" are

a family portrait... When you
add God's Word, God's Spirit,
God's Truth, God's love, and
God's people all together,
the distinctives are what we
look, love, & live like:-)

# We are...



### INTRO:

As we begin to **see the beautiful, biblical portrait of Christ's faith-filled family** defined and described by God's Word, will, and ways, it is critical to remember that the Holy Bible is to ALWAYS BE our ultimate source, authority, and interpreter in ALL things pertaining to one's understanding of reality and application of truth in love.

### Remember,

The biblical Church is Christ's missional family... Moreover, God's Word reveals our Father's will and His family's ways.

### 2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <u>17</u>so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

### Here are 24 defining & describing HANDS-on DISTINCTIVES of Christianity:

True Christians are biblically, miraculously, intentionally, missionally, and imperfectly...

- 1. Responding to grace
- 2. Repenting of sin
- 3. Trusting the Bible
- 4. Obeying God's Word
- 5. Growing in Christ
- 6. Living Spirit-led
- 7. Praying for guidance
- 8. Following by faith
- 9. **Dying to self**
- 10. Carrying our cross
- 11. BE-ing The Church
- 12. Loving one another (truly loving one another)
- 13. Equipping the saints
- 14. Exemplifying supernatural unity
- 15. Ministering as ambassadors
- 16. Discerning matters shrewdly
- 17. Worshipping God vertically
- 18. Experiencing Him horizontally
- 19. Proclaiming the Gospel (no matter what)
- 20. Fishing for men
- 21. Making discipled warriors
- 22. Winning spiritual warfare
- 23. Loving our King
- 24. Serving His kingdom

### PRAYER:

LORD, we seek to bless You with all that is within us. Help us here, we pray, to be that blessing as we come to better understand You and Your eternal truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Help us to see with Your eyes and love with Your love, all that You would reveal to us through Your Word, Your will, and Your ways. May we grow in our grasp of Your realities, Your means of restoration, and Your mission of reproduction. In the holy name of Jesus, we pray. Amen and Amen

### **CONTEXT:**

Macro

This lesson marks another major transition point in our curriculum's eye-opening explanation of Christianity. By way of review, we began in Section One with the reality of Almighty God having 1 Divine DESIGN (also known as a biblical worldview and the eternal application of Jesus Christ's Gospel). In Section Two, we addressed the 3 DIVISIONS (Head, Heart, and Hands) that make up the "being" in every human being. Next, in Section Three, we demonstrated how Christianity accounts for, defines, and describes all of humanity, every person, past, present, and future. We noted that all people can be identified as one of the 5 DISCIPLES – Lost, Lover, Learner, Leader, or Lifer. Moving forward, Section Four revealed, engaged, and explained the 7 fundamental DETAILS of God's Divine DESIGN... because we all need to know what we need to know. To be more specific, those seven truths are: The Foundations, The Framework, The Facts, The Fight, The Faith, The Family, and the truth about Forever.

Then, in Section Five, which we just completed, our focus shifted from HEAD based truths to 12 HEART shaping exercises or disciplines - each having the potential to strengthen one's personal relationship with Christ, His Church, and their collective mission: <u>bringing God glory by finding & growing more glorifiers.</u>

We used the acronym J.E.S.U.S.'S. P. S.W.O.R.D. to outline and harmonize a biblical, missional, and intentional methodology for growing in God's love - & His loving witness. The 12 HEART DISCIPLINES are: Journaling... Eating-nothing (fasting)... Scripture-intake... Understudy of Scripture... Stewardship... Solitude... Prayer... Serving... Worshipping... Outreach... Relationships... and Development.

Now, our curriculum and study will transition to The HANDS. This is where *Christians demonstrate to the world that Christ is in their worship & witness.* Whereas our time spent in the HEAD sections (1-4) focused on the truths that Christians need and seek to LEARN, and our concentration on the 12 HEART DISCIPLINES of section 5 helped us to grow in God's LOVE, our sixth and final section will walk through the 24 DISTINCTIVES, which explain & exemplify how Christians are to faithfully LIVE... and fully BE The Church... together – all by God's grace & ALL for His glory!

God's Word puts it this way:

"Let us not love with word and tongue but in action and truth." –  $1^{st}$  John 3:18

And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. – Acts 2:46-47

### I. DISTINCTIVES are FRUIT:

It is important to realize that God's miraculous and authentic **Christian DISTINCTIVES** are the FRUIT of saving grace and faith (Ephesians 2:1-10). As Jesus described in John 15, people can do nothing outside of their abiding in Him and obeying His Word, will and ways. In short, there will be no fruit unless one remains attached to and provided for by the true Vine and divine Root. With that said, a cautionary note is worth sharing here, beware the counterfeits that abound around the world. **Plastic fruit is deceptive vs. DISTINCTIVE!** 

### **Galatians 5:22-25**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

### II. DISTINCTIVES are FAMILY:



DISTINCTIVES, by definition, are those "distinguishing characteristics that are notable for having a special quality, style, and/or attractiveness" (Dictionary.com).

When it comes to God's family, the true Church, each Christian and their individualistic DISTINCTIVES are as unique as their potential. At the same time, in the same way that a billion unique snowflakes can be combined to make a single snowstorm, or countless swatches of scrap fabric can be sewn together to make a single quilt, so it is with God's family. The LORD creates His Christian family with a both/and combination of DISTINCTIVE uniqueness, as well as DISTINCTIVE love and defining unity.

# Christianity's DISTINCT family (ecclesia) has a DISTINCTIVE unity (koinonia).

"By this all people will know that you are My disciple, if you have love for one another."

— John 13:35

"The more genuine and the deeper our community becomes, the more will everything else between us recede, the more clearly and purely will Jesus Christ and his work become the one and only thing that is vital between us."

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

### III. DISTINCTIVES are WITNESS:

The most biblical and healthy understandings of Christianity will include an embrace of two overarching and DISTINCTIVE purposes. Namely, per God's Word, will, and ways, every Christian has received miraculous, saving grace, as well as the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to:

### 1. Bring glory to God.

### 1 Corinthians 10:31

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

### 2. BE Christ's witness.

### **Acts 1:8**

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, **and you will be My witnesses** in Jerusalem (locally), and in all Judea and Samaria (regionally), and to the end of the earth (globally)."

God's DISTINCTIVE people have been filled with His Holy Spirit for the express purpose of living DISTINCTIVE lives. When the world sees the LORD's loving family living out their divinely empowered and God-honoring worship, work, and warfare, the resulting fruit will serve as a faithful witness, built with supernatural, grace-based, and missional DISTINCTIVES.

"God created me—and you—to live with a single, all-embracing, all-transforming passion—namely, a passion to glorify God by enjoying and displaying his supreme excellence in all the spheres of life."

- John Piper

### The Christian Distinctive

What distinguishes Christianity from all other religions is that it is a *revealed* religion. Christianity is not about our search for God or our means of finding him. Christianity is not a religion that works its way upward. It is all about God coming to us — God in grace making himself known to us and making a way for us to enjoy fellowship with him.

And so, at the very heart of Christianity is, simply, a message — a message from God to us about what he has done to bring us to himself.

If Christianity is distinctively revealed religion, then it is also uniquely *authoritative*. It does not offer itself as the best and highest of human thinking about God or even the best or most successful of human efforts to know God. It professes to be nothing less than the unique word from God, his very own self-disclosure and the record of the actions he has taken in Jesus Christ to bring us into fellowship with himself.

One of Rudyard Kipling's characters declares, "The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone; He don't obey no orders unless they is his own." That is to say, human religions lack authority — they form their own ideas and "discover" their own beliefs.

By contrast the Christian is "under orders," because unlike human religions, Christianity is a revealed religion — divinely revealed. We Christians are not our own touchstone of truth, and we do not confuse our ideas about God with His own self-revelation. We learn truth about God not from "inner lights" within ourselves but from God's own objective Word.

And apart from this external authority, there is no Christianity. This, at bottom, is Christianity's leading distinctive.

And so, we Christians prize Scripture as God's Word. We joyfully submit to it. And we enthusiastically proclaim its message of grace in Jesus Christ to the world.

- Dr. Fred Zaspel

### Micro

"When the church becomes an end in itself, it ends. When Sunday school, as great as it is, becomes an end in itself, it ends. When small groups ministry becomes an end in itself, it ends. When the worship service becomes an end in itself, it ends. What we need is for discipleship to become the goal, and then the process never ends. The process is fluid. It is moving. It is active. It is a living thing. It must continue to go on. Every disciple must make disciples."

— Robby Gallaty

### Message

"The greatest gift a church can receive is to have a group of families who take their responsibilities with such Christian seriousness that they are willing to completely alter their lifestyle to raise up disciples for Jesus Christ."

— Abraham Kuyper

### How to Equip the Saints for Ministry

The Lord not only tells pastors that they are responsible to equip the saints, He also tells them how to go about it. A simple study of the word "equip," as used by Paul in Ephesians chapter 4, reveals four tools that are essential for preparing saints for service.

### 1. Prayer

When we do a study of "equip" (Gk., *kataridzo*), we discover that the first tool the pastor has for equipping the saints is *prayer*. The author of Hebrews concluded his letter with a prayer that God would *equip* his readers with everything they would need to fulfill His will.

Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus—the great Shepherd of the sheep—with the blood of the everlasting covenant, equip you with all that is good to do His will, working in us what is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Heb 13:20–21)

Wise pastors recognize that the Holy Spirit is already committed to preparing saints for service; it only makes sense for him to pray to that end.

Most pastors should spend less time praying that their people get out of the hospital and more time praying that they get into ministry. I suggest that you spend your energy praying that the Lord would "equip [them] with all that is good to do His will, working in [them] what is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever" (Heb 13:21).

### 2. The Word of God

The second tool the pastor has for equipping the saints is the Word of God. Look carefully at the end of this familiar verse.

All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, *equipped for every good work*. (2 Tim 3:16–17, italics added)

Paul told Timothy that the Word was sufficient to equip him and his men for every good work. No wonder Paul told Timothy to preach the Word (2 Tim 4:2). No wonder Jesus prayed for His disciples that the Father would sanctify them through the truth of the Word of God (John 17:17). No wonder Jethro told Moses to focus part of his energy on "instruct[ing] them about the statutes and laws, and teach[ing] them the way to live and what they must do" (Exod 18:20).

### 3. Intentional Training

The third tool for equipping the saints is intentional investment. Luke records Jesus as using the word *kataridzo* as the result of intentional discipleship training. "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40).

Paul told Timothy to use this tool of intentional investment: "And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2).

### 4. Connection with Other Members of the Body of Christ

As you know, the Corinthian church was a disjoined church. One of Paul's primary motivations for writing them the letter 1 Corinthians was to bring them to unity. In his letter he urges them to link together in greater unity. In doing so, he uses the term *kataridzo*: *I urge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all say the same thing, that there be no divisions among you, and that you be united with the same understanding and the same conviction.* (1 Cor 1:10)

As pastors, we find it difficult to really equip saints for ministry until we begin to place a greater emphasis on healthy holistic small groups. In healthy home groups the saints actively serve each other. Instead of having a professional "minister" serve them, they minister to each other. They pray for, encourage, and challenge each other.

Each group can also actively engage with needs in the community. We can adopt a widow, others a single mom, while still others can work at the homeless shelter, etc.

By Dave Earley adapted from Pastoral Leadership Is...

**LIFEWAY Resources** 

BIG IDEA: **EQUIPPING THE SAINTS is an intentional commitment to prepare** 

discipled warriors for God-honoring, biblical-worship & warfare; ALL thru faithful obedience & missional, Christ-like discipleship.

PREVIEW:

1. EQUIP

2. "ING"

3. THE SAINTS

TEXT:

### **Ephesians 4:12**

11And it was He (Christ) who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for works of ministry and to build up the body of Christ,

### 1. EQUIP

Illustration:

It is not uncommon for people to confuse teaching with EQUIPPING. While the two are related (teaching is a subset of EQUIPPING), they are not the same. A couple illustrative examples close to my heart come to mind...

First, my wife blessed me and our four children years ago by teaching them all to read. In doing so, as a home-schooling mother and teacher, she had to first introduce the alphabet's letters and their corresponding sounds to each child. Both, the introduction and teaching processes involved relentless repetition, loving patience, and dedicated interaction. Eventually, everyone was able to read and write, all because my wife had taught them... The connection comes in (between teaching & EQUIPPING) when you zoom out and see how my wife's teaching was a subset of my children's broader EQUIPPING. By being taught how to read, our children were EQUIPPED with the potential to gainfully impact and bless the world in which they live.

In a similar way and context, our eldest son once thanked me and my wife for not merely teaching him WHAT to think... but rather, by contrast, for EQUIPPING him with the experiences, skills, & ability to know HOW to think in any given set of circumstances. *His EQUIPPING went beyond his teaching.* 

### **Explanation:**

### To EQUIP is to prepare and make ready for effectiveness.

Even with such a short description, one can quickly see that EQUIPPING, by definition, requires some prerequisite explanations. To be more specific, knowing what is being prepared for... what constitutes readiness... and how effectiveness is to be measured... are all critical questions to ask and answer before engaging in any attempt to EQUIP. To be sure, going forward without accurate insights and rock-solid, reliable understanding of Christ-like EQUIPPING's core essentials (regardless of one's intentions &/or sincerity), is at best, dangerous, and at worst, destructive. With that in mind, this lesson will focus on a three-tiered perspective on EQUIPPING THE SAINTS:

- 1. <u>Blueprint</u>: True & healthy Christians & churches will recognize and rely upon God's Word as their always authoritative blueprint for all matters of missional ENGAGING, EXPLAINING, EQUIPPING, EMPOWERING, and/or EXEMPLIFYING.
- 2. <u>Bullseye</u>: In ALL matters of Christian EQUIPPING, bringing God glory is to always be our ultimate bullseye (1st Corinthians 10:31). To EQUIP with any other intention or outcome than to bring God glory is to miss the mark (sin) in one's attempt to EQUIP.
- 3. <u>BE-ing</u>: Jesus promised to send His Spirit to empower His people to BE His witnesses (Acts 1:8). When we couple that promise with its affirming counterparts in 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:3 and Philippians 4:13, it becomes beautifully clear that true Christians have supernatural EQUIPPING power already inside... Thus, biblical EQUIPPING within Christianity should be designed to help Christians BE who they have already BECOME...

BE-ing is EQUIPPING's bullseye per God's blueprint!

### Application:

"Discipleship is the process of becoming who Jesus would be if he were you."

— Dallas Willard

### "Discipleship is not an option.

Jesus says that if anyone would come after me, he must follow me."

— Tim Keller

"Thriving churches have the Great Commission as the centerpiece of their vision, while dying churches have forgotten the clear command of Christ."

— Thom S. Rainer

### To understand what it is to EQUIP is to understand discipleship.

<u>Discipleship</u>: (verb) The intentional endeavors of 'miraculous, Christ-like, works-in-progress' (a.k.a. biblical Christian disciples) engaged in 'finding the lost AND growing the found,' into family-members who are in-turn committed to making disciples, who make disciples, who make disciples... all by God grace and all for His glory.

### 2. "ING"

### Illustration:

"Most people in America, when they are exposed to the Christian faith, are not being transformed. They take one step into the door, and the journey ends. They are not being allowed, encouraged, or equipped to love or to think like Christ. Yet in many ways a focus on spiritual formation fits what a new generation is really seeking. Transformation is a process, a journey, not a one-time decision."

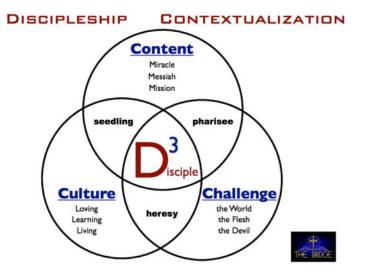
— David Kinnaman

### Explanation:

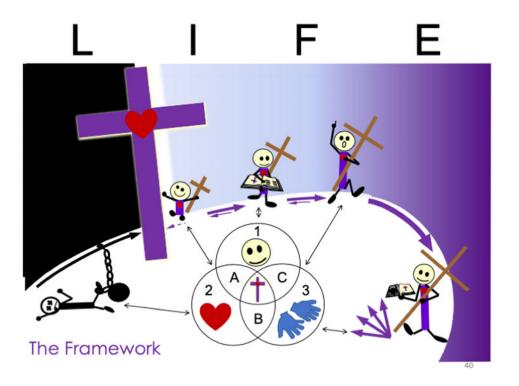
A. <u>MICRO</u>: The active side of EQUIPPING is represented by the "ING" of this lesson... With that said, it should be noted that there are two sides to the EQUIPPING coin... On one side, there is the EQUIPPER, and on the other, the person/people being EQUIPPED. For the purposes of this lesson, both the EQUIPPER and the EQUIPPED are in the active process of EQUIPPING.

Our "micro" reference is used to highlight personal EQUIPPING's HEAD, HEART, and HANDS components. It is to zoom in on the discipleship dynamics WITHIN the EQUIPPING experience(s).

Only when EQUIPPING brings the **content** of biblical truth to the HEAD, the **culture** of biblical love to the HEART, & to one's HANDS, the tools needed to biblically persevere through life's **conflicts**; only then can the EQUIPPING in question be counted on to effectively EQUIP THE SAINTS. Without all three components converging in authentic, blood-bought, transformation, as evidenced by multiplying and maturing fruit over time, the energy exerted, regardless of how religious, moral, pragmatic, or "successful" it appears to be... it is not true, Christian EQUIPPING.



B. MACRO: Monitoring and measuring one's movement and maturing as a biblical disciple (to include the LOST disciples who are around Christianity, actively churched, but not truly IN-Christ) is what is meant by macro EQUIPPING. In short, it aims to inform, inspect, and inspire one's biblical understanding of discipleship's lifelong movements and broader context. In our previous lessons, we referred to this EQUIPPING tool as the 5 DISCIPLES and/or The FRAMEWORK.



Application:

### The Bible's exhorting calls for our continuous EQUIPPING!

"The Christian life is the discipled life and the discipling life."

— Mark Dever

"Making disciples of Jesus is the overflow of the delight in being disciples of Jesus." — David Platt

"The one indispensable requirement for producing godly, mature Christians is godly, mature Christians."

— Kevin DeYoung

### 3. THE SAINTS

Illustration:

No one... NO ONE can be "born again" without the "again."

When was your spiritual funeral? (see John 3:3; 3:16; 3:36)

"Until you have given up your self to Him you will not have a real self..."
- C.S. Lewis

Explanation:

Truth... *THE SAINTS are who the Bible says they are... and are not*. With that foundational fact established, God's Word is emphatically clear, tragically, there are many religious "aints" who think they are SAINTS (Matthew 7:21-27). To put it in Jesus' words, there are goats who think they are sheep, weeds that think they are wheat... children of the devil (1st John 3:10 & John 8:44) who deceive others into thinking they are children of God. Why is this such an important point? Because, as Charles Spurgeon warned:

"Nobody can do as much damage to the church of God as the man who is within its walls, but not within its life."

On the miraculous and missional side, THE SAINTS are The Church! THE SAINTS are the true Christians. THE SAINTS are the biblical family of God. THE SAINTS are the biblically born-again believers. THE SAINTS are miraculously transformed ministers of reconciliation. THE SAINTS are the light of the world. THE SAINTS are the cross-carrying pilgrims walking the narrow path of Christ-likeness. THE SAINTS are the ambassadors for Christ. THE SAINTS are the supernaturally empowered witnesses of Almighty God. THE SAINTS are heirs with Christ whose inheritance is being held in heaven. THE SAINTS are those whose living hope is here and eternal. THE SAINTS are those whose fear is gone and whose faith is conquering. THE SAINTS are the overwhelming overcomers in this pit-ridden swamp of a fallen world. THE SAINTS are trophies on God's mantle of grace. THE SAINTS are imperfect sinners who live with passion for their Savior. THE SAINTS are those who love God, love people, and serve the world. Finally, THE SAINTS are those who seek to bring God glory by finding the lost and growing the found into more glorifiers... who will exponentially multiply the God honoring process of EQUIPPING THE SAINTS locally, regionally, & globally!

### Application:

"The church is not a theological classroom. It is a conversion, confession, repentance, reconciliation, forgiveness and sanctification center, where flawed people place their faith in Christ, gather to know and love him better, and learn to love others as he designed."

Paul David Tripp

"Discipleship isn't a program or an event; it's a way of life. It's not for a limited time, but for our whole life. Discipleship isn't for beginners alone; it's for all believers for every day of their life. Discipleship isn't just one of the things the church does; it is what the church does."

Bill Hull

"Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ."
— Dietrich Bonhoeffer

### CLOSE:

### Discipleship begins BEFORE salvation, NOT after.

For many, this a paradigm challenging & changing truth. If you doubt, simply ask yourself: When did Jesus begin to disciple His disciples?

### "Only a disciple can make a disciple." - A. W. Tozer

"The vision is that the church's primary mission is to create disciples who create other disciples, just as Jesus intended us to do. It's helping people see that the church isn't a social club, it's not a hospital, it's not a university, and it's not a big show. The church is a community that is developing people who follow Jesus, are changed by Jesus, and then join Jesus on his mission." "Far too many of us assume that discipleship is merely the transfer of information leading to behavior modification. But discipleship, at heart, involves transformation at the deepest levels of our understanding, affection, and will by the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God and in relationship with the people of God." Jesus knew exactly what He was doing with His disciples. He invested His life in the Twelve. He chose to be in relationship with His disciples because He understood that more is "caught" than taught." - Jim Putman

### For What?

"Christian discipleship is a decision to walk in his ways, steadily and firmly, and then finding that the way integrates all our interests, passions, and gifts, our human needs and eternal aspirations. It is the way of life we were created for." - Eugene H. Peterson

### So What?

"We reduce discipleship to a canned program, and so many in the church end up sidelined in a spectator mentality that delegates disciple making to pastors and professionals, ministers and missionaries."

- Francis Chan

# "God is equipping you, protecting you, & readying you to fight for the mission He has given you to change the world." — Paige Omartian

### Now What?

Discipleship entails a life of total self-denial, a humble disposition towards others, a whole-hearted devotion to the Lord alone, a willingness to obey His commands in everything, an eagerness to sense Him even in His absence, and a motivation that comes from knowing He is well pleased."

— John McArthur

"What I heard was that you can have the one without the other – that you can be saved and not be a disciple. I smelled a theological rat in that claim." — Scot McKnight

"Discipling our children is not about teaching them to behave in a way that won't embarrass us. We're working toward something much more important than that. We're actually raising our children with a view toward leading them to trust and to follow Christ."

— Voddie T. Baucham Jr.

"Church attendance is as vital to a disciple as a transfusion of rich, healthy blood is to a sick man."

— Dwight L. Moody

### **PRAYER**

Dear heavenly Father, thank You so much for the Truth and Love of Your Word, will, and ways. Please help us to absorb and apply ALL that You have shared and commanded in the Bible. May our heads be infilled with Your defining Scriptures, for the express purpose of informing, inspecting, and inspiring our sanctified hearts and serving hands. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen and Amen

Support Sermon: "Jesus Equips His Disciples"

Matthew 10:1-15 March 12, 2017

Sermon Series: Miraculous Metamorphosis