

Disciples Make Disciples

Disciple: Following and Learning From Jesus (Part 4)

Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:8; Acts 4:18-20

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God Uses People to Reach People

- I came to this realization a number of years ago about evangelism. Like a lot of Christians, I wished to see more people come to Christ. So I thought to myself, for the people who have come to Christ, what did they all have in common? In other words, how did most of the followers of Jesus in my life come to faith in Him?
- When I looked around my family, church, and campus ministry, there was a common element in each person's story. Another Christian influenced them. Another Christian showed them Jesus. Another Christian, follower of Jesus, displayed and taught them the way of Jesus.
- There might be someone who picked up a Bible in a hotel room, read it, and came to Christ. There might be someone who stumbled upon a televangelist or YouTube clip and came to faith that way. And even if that was the case, there had to have been a person that put that Gideon's Bible in that hotel room or produced and uploaded the videos. People are still involved.
- Some might come to Jesus in a vision or dream. If that's the case, it's rare and not normative. And even when Paul was met by Jesus on the Road to Damasacus, he was sent to another person (Acts 9).
- Here's the point: God uses people to reach people. I can almost guarantee you, that every Christian you know was influenced by another Christian for God.
- If you are a disciple of Jesus, another Christian has influenced you. God has used another follower of Jesus to help you follow Jesus.
- Followers of Jesus help others follow Jesus. That's what happens. That's Jesus' design. And that was the last thing Jesus said to His followers before He ascended into heaven.

Matthew 28:16-20 - **16** Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. **17** When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. **18** Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Therefore 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.”¹

- This is the Great Commission, the last thing Jesus said before he ascended into heaven.
- This is the church’s marching orders.
- Our purpose is to make disciples. HFC exists to make disciples.

Discipleship Series Review

- This is part 4 of our series on discipleship. Before we get too deep into the text we will look at tonight, let’s do a quick review.
- Message 1: “What is a Disciple?”
 - The word “Christian” is only used three times in the whole Bible (Acts 11:26, Acts 26:28, and 1 Peter 4:16); “disciple” is used 281 times in the New Testament.²
 - The Greek word translated as disciple in the New Testament is *mathetes*. When translated literally it means *learner*.³
 - Mike Tanaro - A disciple is a follower/learner of Jesus.
 - David Young - “A disciple is someone committed to following Jesus and becoming like Him”⁴
 - Dallas Willard - “[A] disciple, or apprentice, is simply someone who has decided to be with another person, under appropriate conditions, in order to become capable of doing what that person does or to become what that person is...it is what [Jesus] calls us to by saying, ‘Follow me.’”⁵
 - “I need to be able to lead my life as he would lead it if he were I.”⁶
- Message 2: “Growing into the Image of Jesus”
 - Discipleship is about growing, transformation, and maturing.
 - An illustration: the goal of a parent is not just to give birth, but to raise a child into a mature adult.
 - For Jesus, the goal wasn’t converts, but disciples. Baptism isn’t the end goal, but the starting line.
 - The goal is for Christians to grow into the image of Jesus.

¹ All biblical references in this document are taken from the New International Version (NIV). *The Holy Bible: New International Version*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

² <https://jdgreear.com/are-you-a-christian-or-a-disciple/>

³ Mike Breen, *Building a Discipling Culture: How to Release a Missional Movement by Discipling People Like Jesus Did* (Pawleys Island, SC: 3 Dimension Ministries, 2011), 21.

⁴ David M. Young, *New Day: Restoring the Revolutionary Mission of Christ’s Church* (Murfreesboro, TN: New Day Press, 2016), 155

⁵ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (New York: HarperOne, 1997), 282-283.

⁶ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 284.

- Message 3: “Three Marks of Growing Disciples”
 - I’ve never met a mature Christian who does not do these three things, and I’ve never met an immature Christians who does these three things.
 - Mature Christians...
 - are regularly immersed in the Bible, the Word of God.
 - have a vibrant prayer life.
 - are active members of a Christian community.
 - These are not the only marks of mature Christians. This is not an exhaustive list.
- Tonight’s message: “Disciples make disciples.”

Definition of Terms

- “Christianese” - slang/language/words Christians use that can be difficult for non-Christians to understand
- Disciple: A disciple is a life-long follower of Jesus, someone who is being transformed and maturing more fully into the image of Jesus.
- Discipleship: “our own following of Jesus”⁷
- Evangelism: Evangelism is sharing the gospel (the good news) of Jesus with someone who is not a follower of Jesus, encouraging them to follow Jesus, with the hope that they too will become a disciple of Jesus.
 - The word for *gospel* in Greek is *euangelion*. *Euangelion* literally means “good news.”⁸ That’s where we get the word *evangelism*. Evangelism is telling someone the good news about Jesus.
 - Evangelical: is a term used in media/overarching American culture, to describe conservative Christians. That’s a more difficult term to define, and people mean different things when they use that term.
- Discipling: “helping others follow Jesus...discipling is deliberately doing spiritual good to someone so that he or she will be more like Christ...helping someone else following Jesus.”⁹
- Mark Dever quotes on discipling:
 - “Part of growing in maturity is helping others grow in maturity.”¹⁰
 - “Part of our obedience is leading others to obedience.”¹¹
 - “Part of following the Son is calling still more to follow the Son.”¹²

Acts 1:8; 4:18-20

⁷ Mark Dever, *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 13.

⁸ David Young, *Extreme Discipleship: Following Jesus from the Gospel of Mark* (Montgomery, AL: E-BookTime, LLC, 2007), 15.

⁹ Dever, *Discipling*, 13.

¹⁰ Dever, *Discipling*, 20.

¹¹ Dever, *Discipling*, 17.

¹² Dever, *Discipling*, 12.

Acts 1:8 - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

- This is Luke's version of the Great Commission.
- Power + The Holy Spirit
 - Jesus is giving His disciples a difficult task, a task that is too difficult for them to do on their own.
 - God will give them power. God will work through them. God's strength will help them.
 - Not only will they not have to depend on their own strength; they won't have to do it alone. He sends the Holy Spirit to be their Advocate, Helper, and Comforter (*John 14:26*).
- Witness
 - A witness is someone who experiences something and tells others about that experience.
 - Jesus commissions his disciples to be witnesses. And even more than commissioning them to fulfill a task, He gives them this new identity. They are His witnesses. A witness is who they are. A witness is who we are.
- Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth
 - They will be Jesus' witnesses everywhere: near and far, to both Jews and Gentiles

Acts 4:18-20 - **18** Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. **19** But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! **20** As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

- This is a perfect example of what a witness of Jesus does.
- In Acts 3 and 4, Peter and John went to the Temple in Jerusalem. As they walked in they saw a man who was lame from birth. The man who couldn't walk asked for money. They did not have any money, but they offered to heal him. Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk" (*Acts 3:6*). The man was healed and could walk and praised God joyfully. This stirred up quite a crowd, so Peter decided to preach a sermon to them. This upset many of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, so a group of Jewish leaders (the Sanhedrin) told them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus anymore. And this is Peter and John's response.
- Witnesses speak about what they have "seen and heard."

- Peter and John saw the works of Jesus and heard the teachings of Jesus, and they were so greatly affected by Jesus' words and deeds, they couldn't keep this message to themselves.
- They say they can't help but speak about it. They can't keep it a secret.
 - We've had experiences when we are so affected by something, we had to tell someone about it.
- What are some things that you have seen and heard that have so greatly affected you to make you a follower of Jesus?
 - Forgiveness
 - Changed life (your life or someone else's)
 - Hope
 - Purpose
 - Healing
 - Community
- Witnesses speak about what they see and hear. That's what we do as disciples.

Three Aspects of Making Disciples

- Disciples are followers of Jesus who help others follow Jesus. Jesus commanded us to make disciples. His last commission to us is to go into all the world and make disciples.
- Mark Dever quotes on discipling:
 - "Part of growing in maturity is helping others grow in maturity."¹³
 - "Part of our obedience is leading others to obedience."¹⁴
 - "Part of following the Son is calling still more to follow the Son."¹⁵
- There are three aspects of making disciples Christians should be participating in:
 - being a disciple yourself
 - Evangelizing
 - Discipling Christians

Making Disciples: Being a Disciple

- In order to make disciples, you must first be a disciple.
 - Are you a follower and learner of Jesus who is maturing and being formed into the image of Jesus?
- As Jesus said in *Matthew 7:3-5* - "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can

¹³ Dever, *Discipling*, 20.

¹⁴ Dever, *Discipling*, 17.

¹⁵ Dever, *Discipling*, 12.

you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

- Make sure you put your oxygen mask on before you help others put theirs on.
- Are you being disciplined? Is someone investing in you?
- If no one is directly and intentionally impacting your growth in Christ, search someone out.
- Look for someone (usually ahead of you in age or experience) who you admire, and glean wisdom from them.

Making Disciples: Evangelizing

- Cherish the Gospel
 - Is the gospel still good for you? Have you forgotten about the grace and love of God?
- Really love people. (holistically)
 - Care about people physically, emotionally, and spiritually
- Invite people to hear the message of Jesus.
- Not everyone has the gift of evangelism. Some are better at it than others. But that still means that you do evangelize when you have the opportunity.
- Live lives that stand out, that make people compelled to
 - *1 Peter 2:12* - Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.
 - *1 Peter 3:15* - Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect
- Love God and love people well. - Greatest Command

Making Disciples: Discipling

- Following Jesus can be difficult. We all need help.
- Use your spiritual gifts to serve other Christians.
- Use your past struggles and experiences to help others who are struggling with what you're struggling with.
- Reach out to someone younger and meet up with them to read a book together.
- Ask some of your buddies to get together and go through a book together or something like that.

Discussion Questions

- God uses people to reach people. Who are some people God used to influence you to come to Christ?
- Of the three aspects of making disciples (your own discipleship; evangelism; discipling other Christians), which aspect do you need to grow in the most?
- What are some ways you plan to help other Christians follow Jesus?