

Making Disciples: Fulfilling the Great Commission

Let's reflect on our calling as believers to make disciples of all nations, as commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ in the Great Commission. Let us delve into God's Word and discover how we can faithfully fulfill this important mission in our lives.

Definition of a Disciple:

Merriam-Webster Dictionary - A disciple is a follower of Jesus Christ who accepts and assists in the spreading of the teachings of Jesus.

Cambridge Dictionary - A disciple is someone who believes in the ideas and principles of someone important and tries to live the way that person does or did.

1: The Call to Make Disciples

Matthew 28:19-20 (NLT) *Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 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 4:19 (ESV) *And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.'*

Essentially, Jesus was saying, follow me and I will make you a disciple - maker, just like me.

Jesus Himself demonstrated the importance of making disciples by investing time, teaching, and equipping His disciples to carry on His ministry after His ascension. Just as Jesus walked alongside His disciples, we are called to walk alongside others, teaching and guiding them in the ways of the Lord. Making disciples involves not only sharing the Gospel but also nurturing and guiding individuals in their journey of faith. It requires a commitment to invest in the lives of others, helping them grow in their relationship with Christ and equipping them to disciple others.

Discipleship is NOT Multilevel marketing

Genesis 2:2-3 *And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.*

When we do discipleship, let us not forget that a greater part of it is on building godly, unhurried friendships, not to form groups that look more like multi-level marketing schemes or *ad hoc* committees. We've seen this in church many times before. People meet in small groups, discuss the word and run out of the door as fast as they can. Their goal is for each member to form his own group and to repeat the process for rapid multiplication. It is only out of godly politeness that we don't call these disciples out "spiritual downlines." (take from: jojoagot.com)

2: Building Relationships

1 Thessalonians 2:8 (NLT) *We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too.*

1 Thessalonians 2:8 (ESV) *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.*

Romans 12:10 (ESV) *Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.*

Acts 2:43-47 (NLT) *A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. 44 And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. 45 They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. 46 "They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity-" 47 all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.*

Paul's relationship with Timothy serves as a powerful example of disciple-making through the bond of mentorship and shared life experiences. As we build relationships with others, sharing both the Gospel and

our lives, we create opportunities for discipleship to take root and flourish. Building relationships based on love, trust, and genuine care is essential in making disciples. When we open our hearts and lives to others, we create a foundation for meaningful discipleship that goes beyond mere instruction to true transformation.

3: Teaching and Training

2 Timothy 2:2 (NLT) *You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.*

Ephesians 4:11-12 (ESV) *And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.*

Colossians 3:16 (ESV) *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

Paul's letters to the early churches provide a blueprint for teaching and training disciples in the ways of Christ. Through intentional instruction and discipleship, we equip others to grow in their faith, enabling them to disciple others in turn. Effective disciple-making involves not only teaching but also training and equipping believers to carry on the work of making disciples themselves. When you read Paul's letters to the churches, you see that it wasn't just flowery conversations. He gave directions, rebuke, instructions and revelation... all in love. We are called to pass on what we have learned so that the cycle of discipleship continues to multiply and impact future generations.

4: Empowered by the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:8 (NLT) *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

Romans 15:13 (ESV) *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 (ESV) *And my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*

Philippians 4:13 (NKJV) *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

The early Christians in the book of Acts exemplify the transformation and empowerment that comes from the Holy Spirit. After receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they boldly proclaimed the Gospel, performed miracles, and lived in unity and love, leading to the rapid growth of the Church. Their lives were a testament to the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit in making disciples and spreading the message of Jesus Christ. Just as the early Church was empowered by the Holy Spirit to be effective witnesses for Christ, we too are called to rely on the Spirit's guidance and power in our disciple-making efforts. When we surrender to the leading of the Holy Spirit, we are equipped to impact lives and communities for the Kingdom of God, reaching far and wide with the transformative message of the Gospel.

Conclusion:

As we conclude this time of reflection on making disciples, let us remember that this calling is not just a task for a select few but a responsibility for every believer. Let us heed the words of Jesus to go and make disciples, knowing that He has promised to be with us always, empowering us by His Spirit. May we embrace the call to invest in the lives of others, building relationships founded on love and trust, teaching and training in the ways of the Lord, and relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to guide and equip us in this mission. Let us go forth from this place with renewed dedication and passion for making disciples, knowing that as we obediently follow Christ's command, we play a vital role in advancing His kingdom and bringing glory to His Name.