

# THE CALL TO DISCIPLE-MAKING

One Aim: Make Disciples  
Matthew 28:18-20  
September 9, 2018

**Summary:** Disciples are learners and apprentices of their master. They are people who live in such a way that their clear aim is to have the master's life reduplicated in them. Thus whatever the master's life and vocation is, the disciples want theirs to be. In the case of Christ, his vocation is disciple-making, so the calling upon us is to be disciples who make disciples. That entails at least three elements:

**Community** — Jesus called Twelve, that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and have authority over demons (Mark 3:14-15). Within the Twelve were three—Peter, James, and John—who were particularly close to Christ. Similarly, we group up in teams of 3-12, that we might learn from one another and experience Christ more fully as his light and life are refracted to us through others. The small group is the basic unit of congregational health and the backbone that runs through all of our ministries. C.S. Lewis insightfully wrote about the fullness of friendship that we experience as each person in a group draws out unique facets of the others. In the same way, we know and learn Christ best in groups where he is in our midst.

**Training** — There is nothing haphazard or left to chance in earnest disciple-making. Rather, there is a plan for training that seeks to develop character, skills, and knowledge according to our age and stage of spiritual life. The training we do should be:

- *Biblical* — We want the text of Scripture to be the text of our lives. More and more we want to be studying not the latest book but the *greatest book*, the Bible itself.
- *Personal* — While there is plenty of general knowledge and skill to acquire that applies to us all, we must also give attention to the individual. What does he or she need that is particular to them? What gifts do we want to encourage? What gaps do we want to fill or what flaws do we want to remediate?
- *Experiential* — Jesus constantly involved the disciples in what he was doing. Experiential, on-the-job training is the only way, ultimately, to build skill. We must get beyond the classroom or the mere discussion into the actual practice of the faith.

Studies have shown how in Mayan cultures, household chores are taught relationally and experientially in early childhood, to the great effect and betterment of everyone's lives.

**Multiplication** — God's people are blessed in order to be a blessing. Every good gift of God can be turned into a blessing for others. As Jesus said when sending out his disciples on a training mission: "Freely you have received, freely give." This is the spirit and ethic of all disciple-makers. "What I have I give you..." (Acts 3:6). "What I received I passed on to you..." (1 Corinthians 15:3). "And the things you heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). We have an outward mindset, always looking to the next person, the next household, the next community where we can reach people who are far from God but near to us. This is the ultimate proof of our discipleship, as Jesus said: "By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples" (John 15:8).

## Discussion Guide:

1. Read Matthew 28:18-20. Commit it to memory.
2. Read the article, "How to Get Kids to Do Chores (Without Resenting It)" by Michaeleen Doucleff dated June 9, 2018 on npr.org. (A second article: How to Get Kids to Do Chores: Does the Maya Method Work? is also helpful.) List all the parallels and insights you see between training children and training disciples.
3. The sermon identified several key elements to disciple-making. Process each one:

### Community

- What do you appreciate most about our small group community? C.S. Lewis talks about how friends draw out facets of one another that we otherwise wouldn't see. Do we help one another see Christ better? How so? How could we do that more?
- We were challenged to consider our time commitments to our group. Do we meet frequently enough to be effective in our discipleship? Are there any ways in which we could enhance the daily aspect of our discipleship?

### Training

- How would you evaluate our group on training? How are we doing on each of the three aspects of training: being *biblical*, *personal*, and *experiential*?
- What improvements could we make?

### Multiplication

- What is one way in which you feel either challenged or motivated to multiply your life and faith into others?
  - To what degree do you think we should take responsibility as a group for multiplying? Does this feel like a compelling call to you? What forms might our multiplying take?
  - In our small group leader training we talk about groups that are "more tightly knit and more missionally focused." What does mean to you? What is one practical, tangible way that we might better embody that vision?
4. Pray for Christ's guidance and empowerment to be *disciples who make disciples* with greater purpose and fruitfulness this year. Pray for our church to gain momentum around The Year of Disciple-Making.