

THE CALL TO DISCIPLE-MAKING

The AIM of Discipleship
Matthew 28:18-20
September 2, 2018

Summary: It's easy to hear the call to "come to Jesus," "follow Jesus," and "be with Jesus" and still be fuzzy on what that means in our modern world. We can't literally leave our nets and follow the embodied Jesus the way the first disciples did. So how does the call to discipleship—and disciple-making—translate into our lives today? What does it mean for us to be disciples?

Here's a definition: *Disciples are people who live in such a way that their clear aim is to have the life of Christ reduplicated in them.*

This is the goal of our faith: Christ in us. In Luke 6:40 Jesus said, "A disciple when he is fully trained will be like his master." The apostle Paul called this having Christ "formed" in us. Dallas Willard calls it being "pervasively possessed" by Christ. What Jesus says, we say. What Jesus does, we do. What Jesus values, we value. What Jesus envisions for our lives, families, church, and world—well, *Be Thou My Vision*.

This reduplication of Christ's life in us is why the disciples could proclaim the gospel, heal the sick, and exorcise demons. It's why Peter asked, and was enabled, to walk on water.

To have Christ as our clear AIM can be further broken down this way:

A: Authority. The gospel is not a message merely about the forgiveness of sins. It is "the gospel of the kingdom of God." It is the good news that the King has come to rescue his people and reassert his reign, creating kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in God that is first in our hearts and in our church, but that will eventually encompass the entire universe. Real disciples, legitimate Christians, place their lives under the lordship of Christ. We pledge allegiance to him.

I: Intentionality. Disciples pursue Christ intentionally. Like professional athletes, we don't just show up on game day and hope to win. Rather, we train, study, practice, and prepare to live the life of Christ. Getting specific about what being a disciple looks like, and how we actually foster it, is what our Year of Disciple-making is all about.

M: Mission. Disciples are apprentices to their masters and therefore join him in his work. Whatever the master is doing, the apprentices are assisting. Sometimes that involves simply serving him, like when the disciples bought food, borrowed a donkey for Jesus to ride on, or prepared a Passover meal. We learn humility by taking on humble tasks, a practice that we never outgrow. But disciples didn't just serve their masters; they *served with* their masters. Like when the disciples assisted in the feeding of the 5,000 (a miracle that Jesus initially invited them to perform); or when he sent them out two by two to proclaim the kingdom. They not only spoke the message; Jesus said, "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give." Disciples perform such deeds because the Lord authorizes them and puts his Spirit within them.

Discussion Guide:

1. Read Matthew 28:18-20. Commit it to memory.
2. The sermon offered a definition of a disciple as someone with the clear aim to have Christ's life reduplicated in them. Does that make sense to you? What does that mean to you?
3. Christians sometimes use the word "disciple" as a verb: We "disciple" people. What do you think that means?
4. Have you ever been disciplined? What was it like? What separates "being disciplined" from normal Christian activity and experience?
5. Read the article, "Through the Years: A Letter from Brent Celek to the Fans." List all the parallels you see between his experience and Christian discipleship.
6. Apply the A-I-M acronym to your life:
 - Authority: What is one area of your life in which rebels and guerillas have undermined Christ's reign? Where do you need to submit to his authority more humbly?
 - Intentionality: What can you do personally, and your group do collectively, to get more intentional about your discipleship?
 - Mission: What might Christ be calling you to do to serve him and his mission? Is there more, less, or something different that you need to do?
7. 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.