

We are looking at areas of growth and maturity for a Jesus Follower.

Today, let's look at the last piece of the puzzle:

A growing and maturing desire to disciple others

In the human body each individual cell has two purposes: sustain its life and sustain the life of the body. In the Body of Christ each individual Christian has two purposes: sustain their life--through growing in their walk with God and staying connected with Him—and sustain the life of the body—through using their gifts to strengthen the body and by discipling others. Many people are intimidated when they think about discipling another person because they don't think they are spiritual enough or knowledgeable enough. To effectively disciple someone you don't have to be a Bible scholar or minister, all you need to do is share with someone the things God has taught you. Each of us is at least a few steps ahead of someone else and can help them on the journey. Biblical discipleship equips people to turn around and start discipling others.

One of the last instructions Jesus gave His disciples before ascending was to make disciples.

Matthew 28:19,20 *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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*

These verses are often called the "Great Commission" and are used to encourage people to witness and evangelize. Witnessing and evangelism are good, but the emphasis in these verses is discipleship. Each of us has a responsibility before God to make disciples.

A lot of Jesus Followers aren't exactly sure what it means to make disciples, or even be a disciple. The whole topic of discipleship is somewhat vague to many.

There is not just one "right" way to fulfill the command of Jesus to make disciples. There are many ways to walk this mission out. One common denominator for all effective discipleship is that it must be personal and consistent. The process of discipleship is rooted in relationship. Discipleship is more than assigning a fill-in-the-blank Bible study to an individual or going to church services. It is the impartation of life, the transference of principles, and leading by example. Obedience to the truth of the Bible must be at the center of discipleship. Discipleship is the building of a biblical foundation in an individual's life so that they are changed by the Holy Spirit from the inside out. The goal of discipleship is to nurture growth in one's relationship with God, resulting in Christ like-character,

which is based on a solid Biblical foundation, the work of the Holy Spirit and the personal, practical, obedient application of biblical truth. While there are many useful tools available that can be used for discipleship, it's important to remember that the goal of discipleship is not to get through as many studies as possible. True discipleship is not the accumulation of biblical information but the development of biblical character. It is about imparting life. The old adage is true, "More is caught than taught." To be an effective disciple maker, we must have the courage, like Paul in this verse, to say, "Watch me."

1 Corinthians 11:1 *Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*

As we disciple others, we have the assurance that God is the one working in us in a mighty way if we allow Him to.

Colossians 1:28,29 *We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.*

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2 Timothy 2:2 *And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.*

Discussion Questions

Meditate on the verses above. Ask the Father to give you a growing desire to make disciples. Ask Him to give you the courage to step out and obey Him in this area. Ask Him to prepare your heart for the upcoming teachings concerning an overview of making disciples and some practical ways to start.

The main questions today are:

1) Have you been or are you currently being disciplined?

2) Are you ready to embark on the journey to obey the Great Commission given to us by Jesus – go and make disciples?

Discipleship Definitions

Disciple – someone who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and is committed to the mission of Jesus (Matt. 4:19).

Disciple making – entering into relationships to help people trust and follow Jesus (Matt. 28:18–20), which includes the whole process from conversion through maturation and multiplication.

Disciple maker – a disciple of Jesus who enters into relationships with people to help them trust and follow Jesus.

Discipleship – entering into relationship with a Jesus Follower to learn to live the way Jesus teaches and see the world with Kingdom filters.