

I. INTRODUCTION – MAKE DISCIPLES

19 Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” 20 They immediately left their nets and followed Him. Matt. 4:19-20

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. Matt. 28:18-20

- A. God can – and does – disciple us in every situation of life, in every type of relational interaction.
- B. As Dallas Willard comments, "If I am Jesus' disciple that means I am with him to learn from him how to be like him."
- C. The primary goal of discipleship is becoming a friend of God. Moses in Exodus 33:11, "The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend." Of Abraham, James tells us, "...Abraham believed God...And he was called the friend of God" (James 2:23).
- D. God is relational and has reached out to us through the life of Jesus, inviting us into relationship with him, dealing decisively with what damages our relationship, namely our sin.
- E. The Holy Spirit has many roles, but one of them is to come alongside us as disciples of Jesus and empower us to live differently. Wherever you are in your walk with God, God's Spirit stands ready and able to help, to guide, to give you wisdom and strength so that you genuinely start to change and live differently.
- F. Effective disciples of Jesus must have an unshakable conviction that relational discipleship is the smartest and most biblical way to reach the world. Unless you believe that at the core of your being, you will continually focus on being externally successful, striving after the things that bring acclaim or affirmation.
- G. God is most interested not in making us happy but in making us holy. David Watson commented, "Every Christian is called to a clear and dedicated discipleship, whatever the personal cost may be."
- H. Ultimately, each church will be evaluated by only one thing - its disciples. -Neil Cole, Ordinary Hero
- I. Yet too often we have a faulty understanding of what it means to go and make disciples. We think of discipleship as the transfer of knowledge, and if we're really spiritual we do some good deeds. But really discipleship is about a change of heart. The doing comes out of a new heart (and only then does it not burn you out or turn into legalism).
- J. It is not immediately apparent how to make disciples. Often we do what we see modeled for us which is often how to teach a class, prepare a sermon, make telephone calls, etc.

K. Evangelism and discipleship are not merely a linear process with one (discipleship) following evangelism and conversion. Even after our conversion, we all need to hear and respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. Often if we are honest we see something like the following:

Evangelism, Discipleship>>>Conversion>>>Discipleship, Evangelism

2. We must train ourselves how to walk with the “pre-Christian” in a wise way.

II. THE FIVE CONTEXTS FOR DISCIPLESHIP

A. There are five common contexts for disciple making that Jesus himself interacted in. The Public, Social, Personal, Transparent, Divine contexts all have various attributes that make them unique while all being connected to the work and ministry of Jesus in disciple making.

1. **Public Context** (Matt. 5-7; Mark 6:34; Jn. 6:1-2) - exists where people gather in the hundreds around a shared outside resource. Using a local church as an example, this gathering would be found in the church’s large corporate gatherings like Sunday morning.
2. **Social Context** (Matt. 9:9-13; Luke 10:1; Luke 19) - is the range between twenty and seventy people, where we share snapshots of who we are and thereby seek to build affinity with others.
3. **Personal Context** (Matt. 8:23-27; Mark 8:27-33; Jn. 13) - formed in groups of four to twelve, where we feel able to share private information. Think, for instance, of good friends talking over drinks, revealing personal thoughts and feelings about their ongoing lives and relationships.
4. **Transparent Context** (Matt. 26:36-38; Mark 10: 35-45; Luke 9:28-36) - is when you are with just one or two others, making a group of two to four people, your closest of relationships. In the Transparent Context, characterized by complete openness and candor, nothing is held back. This echoes the biblical ideal of being "naked and yet unashamed..." (Gen. 2:25)
5. **Divine Context** (Mark 1:35; Luke 6: 12; John 5:19) – represents God’s direct interactions with us, his people, at a one-on-one level. Our focus shifts from cultivating relationships with others to being alone with our Creator and Redeemer as he encounters us in our inner world.

B. In all five of the contexts of discipleship, the essence of our transformation is always our relationship with God, lived out through relationship with others. This means that if you are not in relationship with God and in relationship with others, loving them well, you are not making disciples.

- C. When it comes to discipleship, our experience is that people far from God can be disciplined where they are today. They might be light-years from acknowledging Christ as Savior and Lord, but they are open to learning from him (perhaps as he lives in you) in a certain area of life. For instance, I have found my neighbors to be very open to learning from Jesus about parenting, or caring for the vulnerable, or handling finances, and so on.

III. MAKE DISCIPLES – OPENING OUR LIVES TO JESUS

²⁷ So he answered and said, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,...’ ²⁸ And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.” Luke 10:27-28 [Matt. 22:37-38; Mark 12:30-31]

- A. As disciples of Jesus we open our lives in a *wholehearted, willing, intentional, passionate* pursuit of the Trinity – Father, Son (Jesus) and Holy Spirit.
- B. God’s love comes to us freely and without limits. It is His love that enables us to return that love back to him. We love him back with His love but it comes from our cup!
We love Him because He first loved us. 1John 4:19
- C. Jesus in this moment of human history is working in His church, His body, putting the First Commandment back into first place.
1. *You shall love the Lord your God...*(His promise to work in our lives)
 2. *With all your heart...*(the core of your spirit made alive by Holy Spirit)
 3. *With all your soul...*(mind, will, emotions undivided and focused)
 4. *With all your strength...*(your time, money, skills, strength, wisdom, etc)
 5. *With all your mind...*(mental willful capacity under Holy Spirit guidance)
- D. Jesus calls us into a type of love that can only be empowered by Holy Spirit. What was Jesus’ love like?
9 “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. John 15:9
1. Wholehearted – nothing held back, fully in...
 2. Willing – prepared to act
 3. Intentional – deliberately done on purpose
 4. Passionate – strong feelings or beliefs carried and expressed with deep emotional energy
- E. Jesus is our primary example of spending time alone with the Father to advance and grow his relationship with His Father within the context of life on earth.

- F. Many understand the call to open their lives to Jesus that by the power of Holy Spirit we are transformed and changed into His likeness and image. How that transpires is often a stumbling block to forward progress.

IV. MAKE DISCIPLES – OPENING OUR LIVES TO OTHERS

Love your neighbor as yourself...²⁸ And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.” Luke 10:25-28

- A. One of the greatest challenges to discipleship is to open our lives to others. A primary way God brings transformation to us is through the lives of other people.
- B. Jesus chose twelve men and gave space for many others (including women) to have direct access to his life. Jesus disciplined his small group by spending time with them, eating and interacting with them, training them, empowering them, and living within close proximity with them.
- C. Jesus gave a new commandment to his disciples to love one another as a major sign post to the world around them that they were Jesus’ disciples. This commandment cannot be manifested in a Sunday service only. (John 13: 34-35).
- D. Jesus operated in all five disciple making contexts but gave his greatest energy to those he called to walk with him (12 disciples) helping them open their lives not just to him but to one another.
- E. Jesus called his disciples to do the work of cultivating wholehearted, willful, intentional, and passionate love one for another.
- F. The world is lonely. That loneliness is like a daily dose of arsenic that doesn’t kill us instantly in the moment but the buildup over time wears us out, shuts us down and eventually kills us.
- G. There is a difference between “aleness” and “loneliness”.
1. Aleness = generally means we are by ourself, usually by choice.
 2. Loneliness = generally means we are by ourself, and we don’t want to be. We are missing connection.
- H. From the very beginning in the Garden of Eden, God said that it was not good that man was alone (Gen.2:18). This aleness would certain days have benefits but over the long haul of life, loneliness for a friend, a companion, a spouse, etc. would cause a toxic heaviness to grow.
- I. This truth spoken by God is not just about a man having his life partner in a wife. This is an eternal principle that finds its ultimate understanding in the mystery of the Bride of Christ doctrine.
- J. Jesus is calling us to be compelled by a love that would be willing to disrupt your life for the sake of being present with the love of God in you, making it available for a real living human soul. Jesus calls us to be willing to disrupt our day, our bank account, our time; to be present in someone’s life.

