

WHAT IS DISCIPLING?

*September 10, 2017
The Training Hour
Foothill Bible Church*



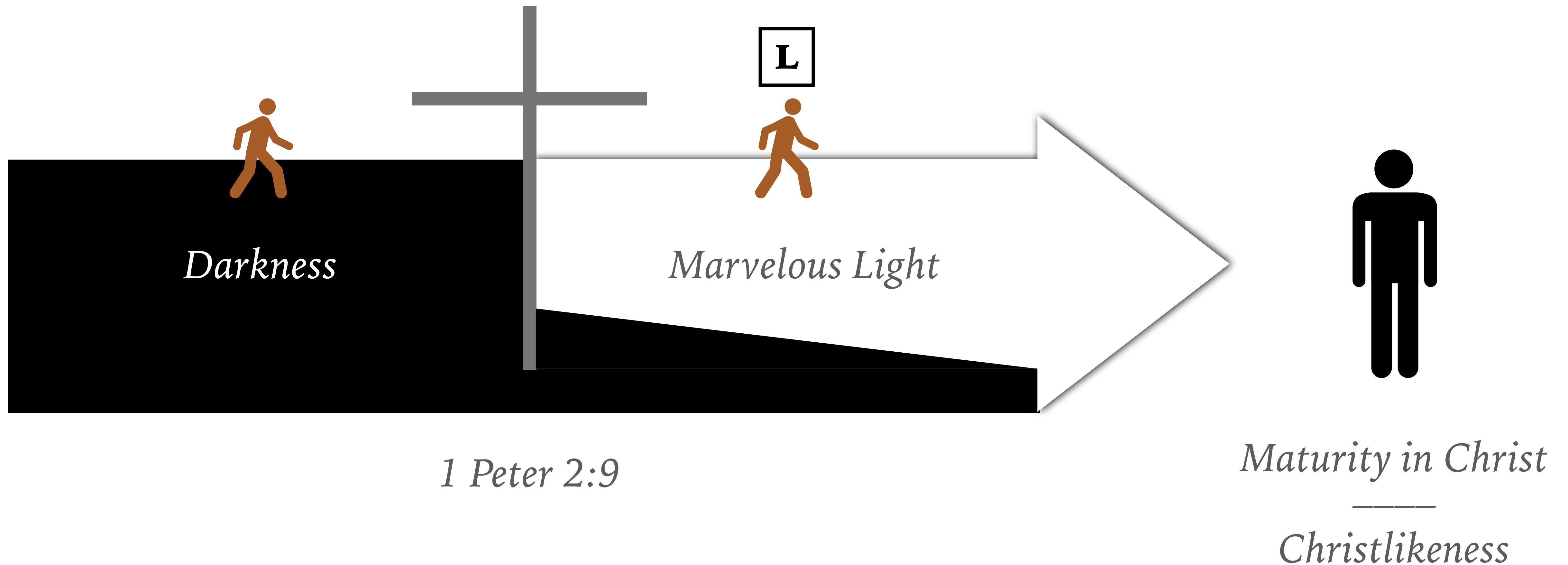
REVIEW

What is a disciple?

- A disciple is a learner.
- A disciple of Jesus is a learner of Jesus.
- A disciple is learning his teaching and his ways. It's both knowledge and behavior. "teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:20)
- This learning involves a repudiation & unlearning of our past allegiance, which is vividly shown in baptism.
- This learning also involves submitting to the Lordship of Christ by taking his yoke. This submission is easy because he has taken the burden of pleasing the Father upon himself.

MOVING TO THE RIGHT

A disciple is a forgiven sinner learning Christ in repentance and faith.



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INFLUENCE

- As humans, we are open to being influenced.
- We exert influence on others.
- How will you use your influence?
- God has designed and instructed for us to use our influence for the good of those around us.

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How would you describe
the difference, if any, between
discipling, disciple-making, and discipleship?

DEFINING THE DIFFERENCES

Discipling, Disciple-Making

Helping Others Follow Jesus

An Activity

Discipleship

Our Personal Walk With Christ

“-ship”: The State Of Being
A Disciple

BY WHAT MEANS IS GOD RESCUING HIS PEOPLE?

- Matthew 28:19–20 – by baptizing and teaching to obey
- Luke 24:45–49 – by proclaiming repentance and forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name to all nations in the power of the Spirit
- Acts
 - 1:8 – they were to speak about Christ in the power of the Spirit to all nations
 - ch. 2 – Peter does this and people are cut to the heart and respond.
 - 14:21-22 – Disciples are made as the word is spoken.
 - The power of the word of God: 6:7, 12:24, 13:49, 19:20
- The making of disciples is God's work, achieved as his word and Spirit work through the activity of the disciples and in the hearts of those they speak to.

DEFINITIONS

Discipling is
helping others
follow Jesus.

Discipling is
deliberately doing
spiritual good to
someone so that
he or she will be
more like Christ.

Discipling is
the people of God
perseveringly
proclaiming & modeling the word of God
in prayerful dependence on the Spirit of God
so that others would be more like Christ.

PROCLAIMING & MODELING GOD'S WORD

1. **The content:** The core of the message we speak is God's plan and promise for humanity centered on Jesus Christ.
 - Paul's two word answer: "Christ crucified." 1 Corinthians 2:2
 - Paul's 10,000 word answer: Romans
2. **The unity:** The message is the same one for unbelievers as it is for believers. The gospel that saves is the gospel that sanctifies.
3. **The source:** The Bible is where this message is found. The Bible authoritatively, inerrantly, and completely gives us the word of God. Therefore the Bible must be spoken.

PROCLAIMING & MODELING GOD'S WORD

4. **The ways:** There are many ways and modes this word can be spoken. The Sunday morning pulpit is just one among many.
 - Acts 20:7–9 – a private home late at night
 - Acts 17:17–18 – in a synagogue or a marketplace
 - Acts 16:13–14 – in the open air
 - Acts 19:9 – in a lecture hall
 - 1 Tim 4:13 – in the form of public reading and preaching in church
 - Acts 8:29–35 – in the form of conversation in a private vehicle
5. **The caveat:** Not all instances of the word being spoken require the Bible to be open.
6. **The example:** The word lived out and obeyed provides a tangible illustration & model for others.

PRAYERFUL DEPENDENCE ON THE SPIRIT

- At every point in the making of Christ-learners, God is active by his Spirit:
 - He speaks by his Spirit through the mouths of the biblical authors to give us his word (Acts 1:16; 4:24-25)
 - He regenerates and renews our hearts by the Spirit so that we grasp hold of his salvation and are justified freely by his grace (Titus 3:4-7; John 3:1-8)
 - He freely gives his Spirit to us as a guarantee of our future hope and citizenship in the kingdom of God (Eph. 1:11-14)
 - He transforms us by his Spirit, and brings forth the fruit of righteousness in our lives (2 Cor. 3:17-18; Gal. 5:16-24)
 - He gives boldness by his Spirit for them to continue speaking his word (Acts 4:31)
 - By his Spirit, he is present with us, gifting and enabling us to speak the word in love to one another for mutual edification (1 Cor. 12-14)

PRAYERFUL DEPENDENCE ON THE SPIRIT

- 1 Cor. 3:6 – God causes the growth.
- We are simply sowers of seed (cf. Mark 4:1-9).
- Illustration of the Thessalonians (1:5, 2:13)
- Example of the Apostle Paul
 - Col. 1:3-5 – Thanksgiving
 - Col. 1:9-12 – Prayer
- May we be like Epaphras: Col. 4:12 – “Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.”

THE PEOPLE OF GOD

- God does the work of making disciples, but he works through his people.
 - It's not half God & half us. It's 100% God and 100% us.
 - He works in and through our actions. As we plant and water, he causes the growth.
- This keeps us from getting proud and from sitting out.
- By God's Spirit, all of God's redeemed people are empowered to speak God's word to the world and to one another.
- This happens in different ways, in different contexts, taking up different opportunities, with different levels of gift, and different levels of responsibilities (some will be pastors and teachers).

PERSEVERING, STEP-BY-STEP

- Does becoming a ‘Christ-learner’ take place in one momentous step, or in a series of incremental steps over time?
- It’s both. And it’s important to say so.
- One step: Our stepping from darkness into light; our transfer from death to life; our being justified in God’s sight.
- Many steps: We live this life in this present darkness. We put to death the deeds of the body and clothe ourselves with the new self which is being “renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator.” (Col. 3)
- Philippians 3:12–14

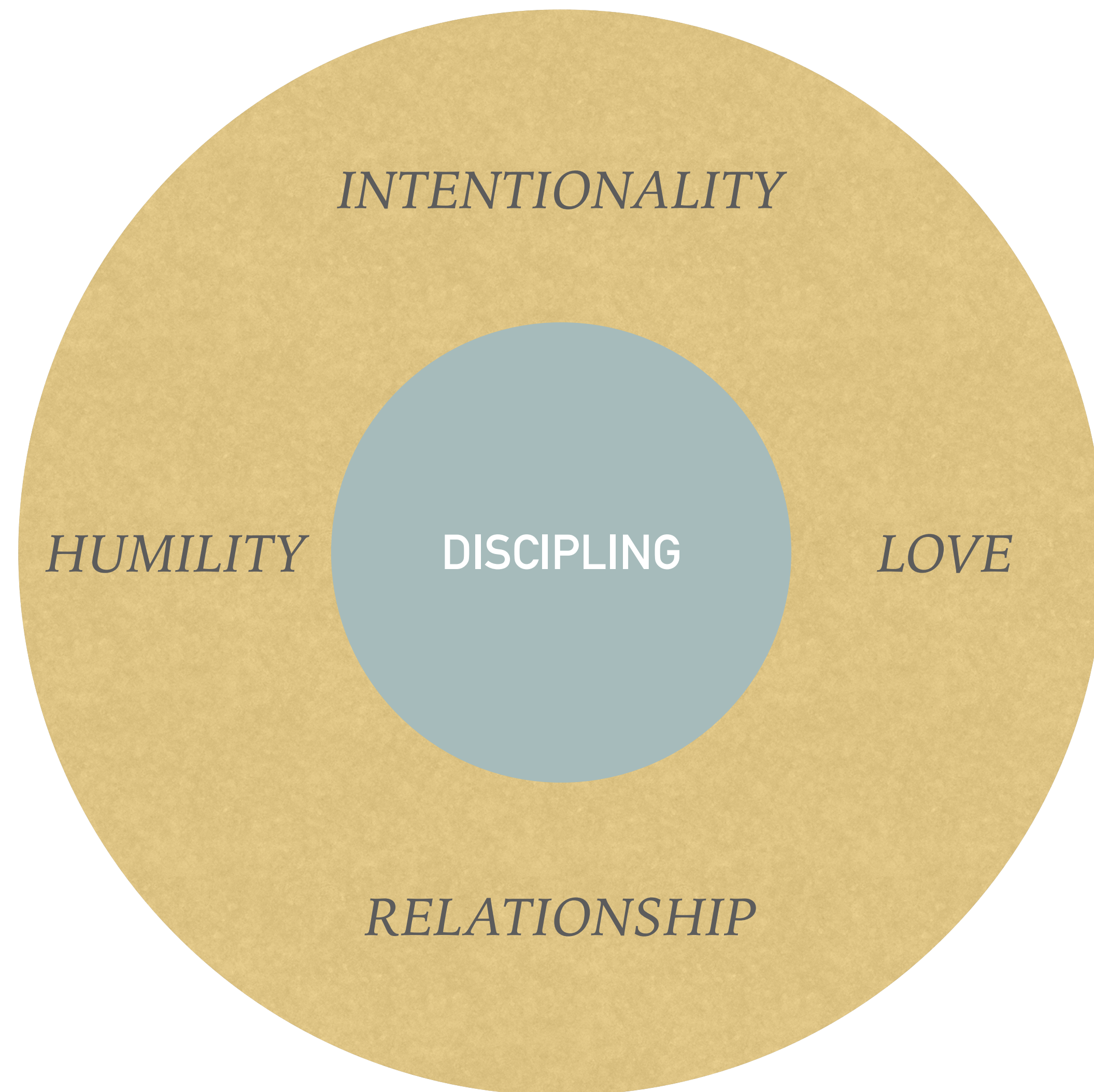
PERSEVERING, STEP-BY-STEP

- Avoiding errors:
 - If we under-emphasize the 'one step' of conversion, we diminish the call to repentance.
 - If we under-emphasize the 'many step' nature of sanctification, we produce a cheap, unengaged, decisions Christianity.
- Our lifelong learning of Christ is messy as we struggle with sin.
- Everyone is at a different place in their transformation.
- We must meet them where they are at and help them take one step towards Christ.

OTHERS MORE LIKE CHRIST

- The goal is clear—Christlikeness.
- Colossians 1:28
- Ephesians 4:15
- The goal is not just to make sure people get to heaven or to see people live morally.
- Internally: To have the thoughts, attitudes, and motivations of Jesus himself
- Externally: To act in obedience, part of which means to be equipped for service, for ministry, for getting involved in the lives of others

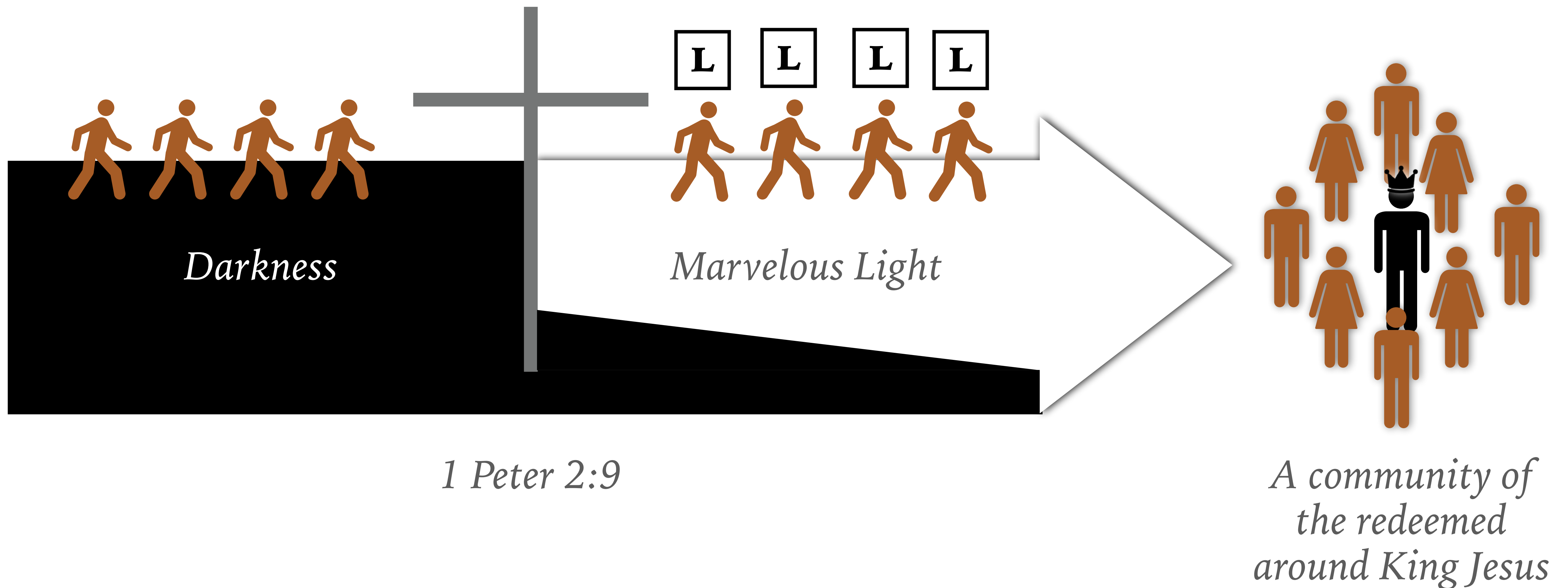
THE DISCIPLING ENVIRONMENT



- **Intentionality:** Discipling doesn't happen by accident. We need to move towards people.
- **Relationship:** People don't grow by input from strangers, but friends. The greater the intimacy, the greater the influence.
- **Love:** This is our motivation for all that we do. We love because he first loved us. It is also what we are looking to be produced in our lives.
- **Humility:** We are just one beggar showing another beggar where to find bread.

MOVING OTHERS TO THE RIGHT

The church is God's means for making disciples.





OTHERS-ORIENTED

- We often think of learning (or discipleship) in terms of our own personal growth and advancement—of becoming a better me in some way.
- But to learn Christ is to be increasingly focused on others rather than ourselves. It's to lay down our lives for others, as Christ laid down his, in weakness and suffering and death.