

# μαθητής

## *In This Issue*

### **The Apostle Matthew & His Discipleship**

**Deuteronomy 6:1-9  
Matthew 28:16-20  
Acts 1:6-11**

### **Pastors Lori's & Brandon's Discipleship Philosophy**

### **Westminster Larger Catechism**

Question & Answer 91

Q: What is the duty which God  
requires of man?

A: The duty of which God requires of  
man is obedience to His revealed  
will.



## **Opening Questions**

Do you have any "heroes"?

Who have they been?

What makes a person a hero in your eyes?

Is it helpful to have heroes? Why or why not?

In what ways, if at all, are the original disciples of Jesus  
examples of heroes of the faith?

What is something you have learned from the lives of the  
12 disciples during your time as a Christian?

Are all Christians called to fulfill the Great Commission  
of Matthew 28:16-20? Why or why not?

Of whom are we called to make disciples?

What is the process of making disciples?

When is making a disciple finished? Why do you say  
that?



Pastor Justin & Bob Thayer, Justin's first Christian discipler and now mentor

# What to Expect

Discipleship is a very important topic for me. It is not because it is my job or because it was my emphasis during seminary. Rather, it is important to me because of a man named Bob Thayer. Bob was the first man to truly disciple me. From that experience moving forward, I have had a hunger for other Christians to engage in true, biblical discipleship.

Over the next four weeks, we will begin to look at the history, habits, and helpful advice of discipleship. You see, so often we misinterpret what discipleship is and we miss out on obeying what God has commanded. Not only that, but we miss out on a fantastic relationship with God and with His people when we do not engage in active discipleship.

Throughout our series, *Disciple: Be One, Make One*, we will have four sermons and four curriculum content that will have the thread of discipleship woven throughout. It is important that you and your group do not miss any of the sermons or group gatherings as we continue to seek making disciples in Plano and beyond. - JF

## What is Discipleship?

If we were to have 100 people in a room and we were to ask them "What is discipleship?", we might get 100 answers. Why is that? Is it because discipleship is fluid? Or maybe because discipleship is always a moving target? Or maybe it is up to each individual to define for herself or himself what discipleship is? Well, the fact of the matter is there is a robust history of discipleship, both within and outside of the Christian context. It has a goal, it has certain markers, and it has language that can and should be used to help the one being discipled to grow. For the sake of Life Group curriculum, we will focus our attention on Christian discipleship and its goals.

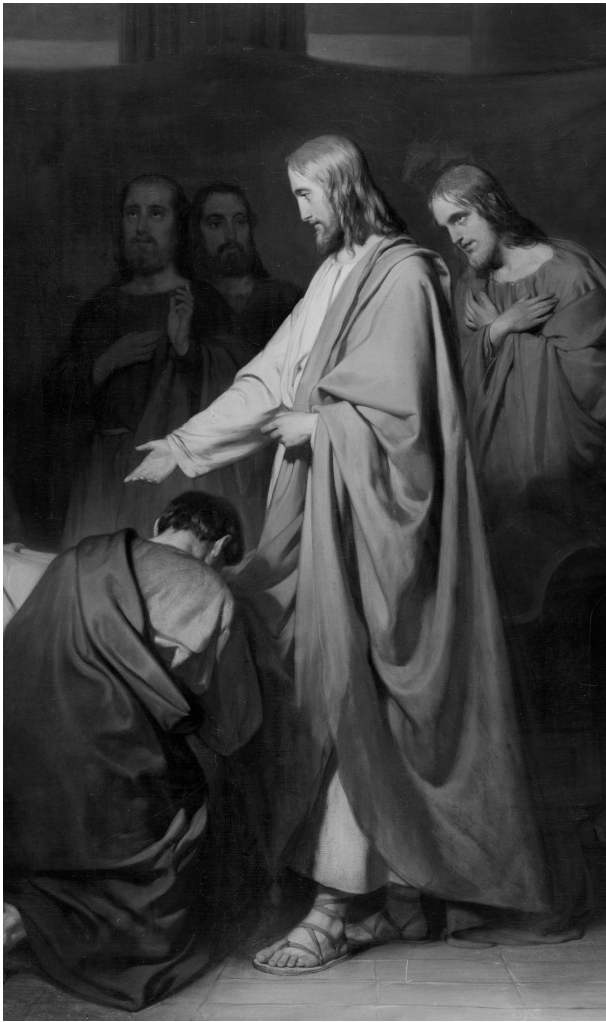
As previously mentioned in Life Group curriculum, the definition of discipleship that I (Pastor Justin) use is - "Discipling is an intentional relationship in which we walk alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ. This includes equipping the disciple to teach others as well."

As a group, discuss what stands out to you about this definition?

Where are you challenged by this definition?

Where are you finding yourself doing what is mentioned in the definition?

How would you rephrase this definition but keep the core components?



# The Apostle Matthew & His Discipleship

Have you ever heard of a two-tiered system of Christianity? Some people say there are ordinary believers AND disciples. The first level called ordinary believers are the ones that show up to church services when they can, give money, serve in some capacity, and know a few things about the Bible. That is where the majority of Christians fall, according to those who say there is a two-tiered system. But those called disciples, now those are the serious students of Jesus. They are the ones that will take a few seminary classes, or have a degree. They are the ones hosting Bible studies and seem to always have an answer. But the fact of the matter is, the Bible does not support this two-tiered system of Christianity. In fact, the Bible supports the idea that all people who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ is His disciple.

Unlike Luke and John, Matthew details his Gospel message by referring to the Twelve, or the small intimate group of Jesus' disciples, more often than the large group that followed Jesus. What does that mean for us? It means that Matthew is highlighting the fact that deep relationship with Jesus and other disciples are an integral part of the discipleship process.

Of course, Matthew was not discounting the other disciples (or students) of Jesus as they followed him. Instead, Matthew highlights Jesus' teaching where He uses this intimate group of disciples as an example of faithful living, and of Jesus' true family, that is the ones that did the will of His Father (Mt 12:49-50). Perhaps the reason Matthew decided to highlight the Twelve more often than those disciples who followed in the crowds, was because often times the crowd was more curious and neutral than they were true disciples.

Why is it that they were neutral and curious? Because, as Matthew writes, he shows that "the true disciple is obedient to the will of God (Mt 12:49-50), who learns from Jesus' parables (Mt 13:51; 24:32), and who is 'discipled' by Jesus in the ways of the kingdom (Mt 13:52; 27:57)."



# Deuteronomy 6:1-9

1 "Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, 2 that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. 3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

## Discussion

Discipleship is not unique to Jesus or the New Testament. God disciplined the nation of Israel as a way to show them who He is and what their duties are as His people. After reading Deuteronomy 6:1-9, answer the following questions. If you would prefer, you can read all of Deuteronomy 6 for greater clarification and context.

1. In what ways can this passage be seen as a way that God is discipling the nation of Israel?
2. What is the nation of Israel commanded to do in this passage?
3. According to your knowledge of the Old Testament, how well did Israel do at following all that was commanded? What were some of the issues they faced? Why is that important to understand as disciples of Christ?
4. The Israelites were instructed to teach the words of the Law to their children, to talk of them often, when they were at home and when they were walking. Learning to love and obey God is not a once a week action but a continual way of life. In what ways have others taught you and encouraged you towards faithfulness outside of Sunday mornings?
5. What is one thing you can do this week, on a day other than Sunday, to encourage someone in your Life Group to grow not only in their knowledge of Jesus but in their obedience as well? Share that with the group so that the group can encourage you this week.

# Matthew 28:16-20 & Acts 1:6-11

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

---

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." 9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, 11 and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

## Discussion

These passages are pretty common and just this last Sunday Pastor Patrick preached from Matthew 28, encouraging and exhorting us to go out on mission to make disciples so that the whole world knows of God's goodness and love. Using the passages above, answer the following questions.

1. In Matthew 28, the eleven remaining disciples were commanded to go into the world and make disciples of others. What might it have felt like to be one of the original disciples after being given this commandment? Do you think there was excitement? Fear? Confusion?
2. Knowing that the command to make disciples did not stop with the first disciples but continues on to us, what feelings do you have knowing that you are to make disciples?
3. What has your experience been with making disciples in the past? How would you like to improve that for the future?
4. Why is it important that the original disciples have the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8)? What does it look like when you try to do things for God in your own strength rather than in God's power?
5. Observing Acts 1:8, we see the order of the territories mentioned get bigger and farther out. God has always planned for missions/evangelism and disciple-making to go hand in hand. What are some of the smaller areas (like family, work, neighborhood) where you can make disciples? What are some of the larger areas (city, state, country, world) where you can make disciples? What will be your first step? Begin to pray for those opportunities.

# Pastors Lori's & Brandon's Discipleship Philosophy

Over the next several weeks, it is my pleasure to introduce you to the experiences and philosophies of discipleship that is exhibited by our pastoral staff.

I have asked all of our pastors three simple questions.

- 1) How do you define “discipleship”?
- 2) Briefly describe how and/or who you were discipled by?
- 3) Briefly describe how you make disciples in your area of ministry.

The purpose of this section of our curriculum is to not only hear from our pastors but also help us identify how disciples are already being made church-wide.

I hope you enjoy reading about Lori's and Brandon's experiences.

## Pastor Lori | Children & Families

1) A disciple is one who follows, learns from, and strives to be more like Jesus. They also want to make more disciples by telling others about Jesus.

2) I came to know Christ at an early age in church, so mainly my parents and Sunday school teachers are ones who discipled me as a young child. Because of learning who Jesus is at an early age, I was able to find my way back to Him in my adult years.

3) In Legacy Kids we have the opportunity to share about Jesus in fun and meaningful ways. We create moments for volunteers to disciple children in their small groups and for kids to disciple one another.

# Pastor Brandon | Students & Families

1) When I think of the word discipleship, I think of the word disciple (duh). And where is that word most prominent? In the disciples Jesus has chosen for himself to walk alongside, I think there's multiple angles at play here. Jesus chose these men to walk with him, to hold him up when he needed it, to teach them where they needed it, and to co-labor in the start of the Gospel movement. But they chose Jesus as well. When He called to them, the Bible says they left everything, their jobs, their families, their lives to follow after Him without a second guess...a somewhat reckless abandon to anything besides their calling. So discipleship to me is a partnership to learn and grow, but also to abandon adjacent things in search of a bigger calling.

2) I still remember the people I view as big disciplers (is that a word?) in my life. A man named Dennis, who essentially became my youth pastor through some of my most formative years. He took the time to teach me God's word, how much Jesus loved me, and made it fun. To this day, I know he still prays for me, and now even my family years after we've moved far away from my childhood home. I hold that relationship still holds some of the most significance in my faith walk, because it shaped how I desire to lead the students I now have the responsibility of discipling.

3) Free tshirts. LOL. No, but really, we've talked a lot about identity over the last year, that our identity should be found first and foremost in Jesus. Anything adjacent to that is superfluous (big word for not important). I want students to know how much Jesus loves each of them deeply, and that just as He did with the disciples, He calls each of us to a big purpose/responsibility. We need to live in a manner worthy to that calling, but also be super crazy ridiculously energetically excited about that. A life with Jesus is everything!

This concludes our curriculum for this week. I hope that throughout our time together, that you are able to identify the uniqueness of Matthew's Gospel and use of the word disciple, that you have learned more about Lori's and Brandon's discipleship model, and that ultimately you see where both the Old Testament and the New Testament call for making disciples of those who belong to God, so that faith and obedience go together. I look forward to walking this journey with you over the next several weeks as we seek both to be a disciple and to make disciples.

Mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance.