

# **DISCIPLESHIP REBOOT**



**RESTORING THE CENTRALITY, NECESSITY, AND  
EXPECTATION OF DISCIPLE-MAKING DISCIPLES**

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## Introduction

Have you ever wanted to do something that has the potential to change a life, move a culture, and impact eternity? Very few things pack enough punch to deliver on even one of those areas, let alone all three. I don't know about you, but I want all three. As a young Christian with newly opened eyes to the sufficiency of God's word, the power of the gospel, and the indwelling of God's Spirit, I believed whole-heartedly that God had given His people all they needed to accomplish this spiritual hat trick. So what would be my method for bringing God's living and active word to bear upon people? Since God used preaching and Bible studies in my life, I pretty much defaulted to those methods. And what glorious methods they are! With Bible in hand, I dove into learning how to teach and preach, and looked for any opportunity to lead a Bible study.

All the while, without even perceiving it, my life was being shaped. God's Word was impacting me from somewhere other than the pulpit. It was coming from the guy sitting next to me. Various men, who were as average as the day was long, were being used by God. There was nothing extraordinary about any of it. They came into my life in the most normal of God's providential ways. From my dad, to friends, to leaders, to pastors, to regular guys who were serious about their walk with Christ, all of them were teaching me. They didn't even have a three point outline! These men were pouring God's truth into my life. People full of godly wisdom and years of experience were answering questions, asking about character issues, listening to my struggles, and helping me apply God's Word. A few of them even did it intentionally, bringing me into their life and carving out time for me. They shaped me profoundly. Discipleship was happening and I didn't even realize it.

In God's goodness toward me, the Spirit began to use His Word to show me that God's Word was not confined to the pulpit. These men were not second-class workers in the kingdom. They were not the clean-up crew that came in after the heavy work was done. On the contrary, they were God's "plan A." Just as Jesus was the Word made flesh (Jn. 1:14) and truth incarnate (Jn. 14:16) we also, in an infinitely smaller and creaturely way, are to be something similar. As one person has said, "If you want to convey a truth, wrap it in a person."

Today, while still preaching my heart out and looking for Bible studies to lead, I have found that the auditorium is not the *primary* context for truth application and life change; two chairs facing each other is the primary context. Don't mistake what I am saying. God can and does use all kinds of contexts and methods for accomplishing His work. Some are far from the biblical ideal. Others are directly tied to it. For instance, preaching is commanded and programs, which often include solid teaching, can be very helpful. Discipleship does happen through these avenues. Huge truth application and life change can and will take place there. A degree of discipleship happens everywhere that prayerful, Spirit-filled speaking of the Word of God takes place.

However, the reality is this: More is needed than just preaching or programs. In fact, the preacher should be preaching that more is needed than just preaching. Preaching and programs should be equipping people. Equipping them to do what? They should be equipping them to be disciple-makers. Sadly, due to the misguided efforts of many churches, as well as the severe lack of examples of personal discipleship, the discipling mandate has become a foreign thing.

Many churches and many Christians need a discipleship reboot. When a computer starts running slow and programs aren't functioning right, the most common solution is a reboot. Why is this? Complicated software accesses lots of other software and

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hardware components on your computer. The longer it runs, the more this happens. Memory gets used, and begins to get fragmented. With all of these components being accessed continuously, when one or more of them get into a problem state, it takes a reboot to put the software back into a proper working state.

Churches and Christians can fall into this. We get caught up in programs and books and conferences and ministry schemes and 40 days of something and...and...and.... Many need a reboot. We need to get back to a proper working state, where simple personal relationships are the key kingdom instrument.

This booklet is intended to help run a discipleship reboot. It is designed to make personal discipleship quickly understandable and practically doable. First, we will lay the Biblical foundation and the explosive growth that builds on it. Then discipleship goals are highlighted, followed by seven small chapters on various practical issues for making it happen and doing it well. Since brevity has been a key goal, everything has been simplified and unadorned by stories. Once you get started, you can make your own stories that will be written into God's glorious plan of redemption.

Once a culture of discipleship is established in a church, this booklet becomes less needful. Disciplers will be teaching the principles directly to their disciples, drawing from years of life experience and from the people who discipled them.





# The Biblical Call to Discipleship

My claim is that every Christian should be participating in personal discipleship, either as a discipler, a disciple, or both. That is an audacious claim in light of discipleship's near non-existence in many churches. If you are really going to reorder your life to incorporate such a weighty and demanding activity, at the very least, a brief overview of scripture is needful. Heavy lifting needs a sure footing, and heavy lifting in the spiritual realm needs a biblical footing. With God's Word as the authoritative ground upon which to stand, let's look to Scripture and see the commands and principles of discipleship.

## THE DIRECT BIBLICAL COMMANDS

Matt. 28:18-20

This is the most famous passage for this topic, and rightly so. The main verb is "make disciples," and evangelism is usually the most emphasized thought. However, that downplays the other half of the verse. What happens when we make someone a disciple of Jesus? The verb is followed by two participles that answer the question; baptizing and teaching. A disciple is baptized, and thereby seen by everyone as identified with, united to, and owned by Jesus Christ. After that, the lifelong process of being taught to obey all that Jesus commanded begins. The discipleship that happens after evangelism is primarily defined by teaching them God's Word, which is the source for knowing how to obey God and all that Christ commanded. The command to disciple converts is as strong as the command to evangelize the lost.

Is this command for all Christians? The commission was given to the Apostles, so does it bear upon all Christians? Yes, it does. There are three reasons. The first reason is the details of the command itself, the second reason is biblical precedent, and the third reason is practicality.

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First, Jesus commanded that disciples be taught to obey all that he commanded, including this command. Every command issued to the apostles that extended out into the church age applies to individuals in the church as well.

Second, the biblical precedent is what we see happening in Acts. The Apostles have center stage up to chapter 6 of Acts, but afterwards more and more people join in on the disciples-making task. In Acts 6:5 Stephen comes onto the stage, preaching with great power. In 8:4 a wave of disciple-making breaks forth. In 8:5 we see Philip doing the same thing. The movement expands in 11:20 when unidentified “men from Cyprus and Cyrene” carried the message to the Greeks. In Acts 18:24 Apollos joins the disciple-making task and is encouraged by the brethren. While the word “preaching” is used in many of those verses, the Greek word communicates a proclamation of the gospel in whatever context you are in, whether public preaching or living room conversation (Acts 8:34-35). Additionally, in Paul’s letters he speaks of co-laborers who were working alongside him. This is disciple-making and disciple-teaching. The Apostles didn’t chide these other people for usurping their call. On the contrary, the Apostles confirmed their work. Therefore, the commission to make and teach disciples was passed along from the Apostles to all other believers. It is for us.

The third reason is simple practicality. If the commission was only given to the Apostles, it would have died with the Apostles and the church would have come to a screeching halt, waiting for God to give another command. None of this happened. Great commission discipleship is for all Christians.

## 2 Timothy 2:2

This passage is the command for leaders to disciple new leaders. The leading men in a church are under a divine mandate to

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deposit the treasure of the gospel and the whole counsel of God into faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Notice there are four generations within this one verse; Paul, Timothy, men that Timothy would teach, and lastly those whom Timothy's disciples would teach. It does not stop there though. This same mandate would rest upon all of these leaders, making it a perpetual cycle. If the church does not have leaders discipling leaders, who are imitated by lay members who then disciple lay members, the church is doomed. Thankfully we have a Savior who has promised to build His church, and He will ensure there will always be faithful men.

### Titus 2:3-5

While all believing women in all stages of life are included in the commission of Matthew 28, for most women the home is where their legacy is made. The home is the grand theater where people are molded and equipped for life. It happens there like nowhere else. Titus 2:3-5 provides special discipling instructions for such a crucial role. Proverbs 14:1 says the foolish woman tears her house down with her own hands. But the same verse says that the wise woman builds her house. Keeping house and raising children are nearly unparalleled in their impact. What a grand calling! Therefore, women must disciple other women in how to do this. While still rather broad, Titus 2:3-5 is nonetheless an explicit command for what to address in discipleship. It lists 7 sub-goals before getting to the main goal. The main goal is for the Word of God to not be dishonored. Personal discipleship is the vehicle for achieving all these goals. Therefore, every woman who is pursuing Christ should be heeding the call of Titus 2 and discipling younger women.

### Eph. 4:15-15

This passage is preceded by some important statements about why Christ gave gifted men to the church. Those men are to

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equip the saints. Verse 14 tells us the result. The saints will not be tricked or carried away by false teaching, but instead, verse 15 says they will be speaking the truth in love. This prayerful, Spirit-empowered speaking is the core of discipleship. The growth of the church in Christ depends upon every Christian being equipped to do this.

Eph. 5:18-21 & Col. 3:16

These two passages are considered together because their similarities make them nearly parallel. Many passages in these two letters are like that. Notice in our verses that there is a cause and an effect. The two causes are different (being filled with the Spirit and having the word of Christ dwell within) but the effects are almost identical (teaching/speaking, singing, and giving thanks). Therefore, the necessary effects of the commands are as much a part of the command as the command itself. Teaching is a necessary effect that flows from being filled with the Spirit and being indwelt by the word of Christ. Since every Christian should be filled with the Spirit and filled with the Word, every Christian is to teach God's Word. This should not be confused with the gift of teaching. All qualified elders will have this gift (1 Tim. 3:2). But, every Christian should be teaching in some way. Since teaching is the dominate feature of disciple-making, these passages qualify as a command to disciple. Every Christian should be teaching by word and/or example what it means to obediently follow Christ.

Eph. 6:1 and Dt. 6:4-9 – Fathers

There is one more command that will necessarily include discipleship; the command for fathers to teach their children. This teaching is far more than formal classroom-type instruction. Deuteronomy 6 is explicit that fathers are to teach their children in every sphere of life. This is quintessential discipleship. Eph. 6 conveys the same thing in an economy of words. Fathers must not exasperate their children, but that is what will happen if their

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children do not hear instruction, see examples of that instruction, and receive correcting discipline in all areas of life. A mother will be helping and advancing this cause alongside her husband. In cases where a husband is disobedient or absent, the mother will disciple the children and enlist help from godly men if possible.

Conclusion:

In some of the most significant passages of Scripture, reaching every Christian, the discipleship mandate calls every believer to be teaching someone else how to follow Christ, or to be under the discipleship of a more mature Christian.

### **Why So Few Commands?**

The direct and explicit commands to do discipleship are few and mostly nonspecific. Why is this? First, though there are few passages, they are crucial ones. Deuteronomy 6 and Matthew 28:18-20 are arguably two of the most important passages in the whole Bible for directing the lives of God's people. Second, while principles are not commands, they are weighty biblical realities that cannot be ignored, and they are numerous. These will be highlighted below. Third, I believe the nonspecific nature of most of the commands is God's way of making the discipling mandate achievable through innumerable means. Think about it: A disciple is a learner; therefore every form of teaching is a context for discipleship. How many different forms of teaching are there? There are countless forms of instruction, and they exist under two big umbrellas. One teaching umbrella is verbal communication and the other teaching umbrella is example. Under those two umbrellas you can teach (or disciple) by casual conversation, by lecture, by directives, by courageous action, by restraint displayed, by emotions expressed, by hard work exerted, by what you abstain from, by what you participate in, by what you devote energy to, by what you give preference to. The list goes on and on. When you bring a person into your life, discipleship will

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happen. It is the nature of humans to learn from those with whom we have relationships. By sharing life in some way, you will be teaching someone in the intentional moments and the unintentional moments how to obey Christ and what it can look like. Unless a Christian has isolated himself or is living in obvious sin, there are various ways that most Christians are helping another person learn to follow Christ.

## **Half-Hearted Discipleship**

This means the crucial question is not if you are doing discipleship, but if it is Christ-exalting discipleship carried out in full measure. The goal of this booklet is to impress upon today's church that intentional, personal discipleship is one of the best ways to fulfill the second greatest commandment; which is to love your neighbor as yourself. Romans 13:10 says, "love is the fulfillment of the law." So love fulfills the law, and personal discipleship can be the fullest expression of love.

How we serve today can be related to how sacrifices were made in the Old Testament. God made it utterly clear about what He expected concerning sacrifices. A person was never allowed to bring animals that were lame or blighted in some way. A defective sacrifice was unacceptable. Discipleship that is skimpy on scripture application or is discredited by hypocrisy is defective discipleship. Additionally, and this is important for our topic, a person was never allowed to bring a disproportionate sacrifice. If a person was poor, there were provisions in the law of Moses for smaller sacrifices, such as a turtledove instead of a lamb (Lev. 5:7). But if someone had flocks of sheep, but brought a turtledove, this was sinful because it was withholding a worthy sacrifice for a glorious God. A deficient sacrifice was unacceptable.

If you have resources such as a growing degree of spiritual maturity, mental capacity, godly leadership, and trustworthy materials and you are not pouring those same resources into other's lives according to your ability, then you are bringing a deficient sacrifice, so to speak.

Christian, I am not asking if you are doing *something* to make disciples of Christ, I am asking if you are doing all you can by the power of God's Spirit to make disciples. Consider this thought from Jerry Bridges about the seductive nature of half-hearted obedience.

If we are to love God with all our heart and soul and mind, and if obedience is a major part of such love, then it follows that we are to obey Him with all our heart, soul, and mind. We are to put everything we have into obedience to Him.

However, we tend to obey God [like we use cruise control in our cars]. To continue the driving analogy, we press the accelerator pedal of obedience until we have brought our behavior up to a certain level or "speed." The level of obedience is most often determined by the behavior standard of other Christians around us. We don't want to lag behind them because we want to be as spiritual as they are. At the same time, we're not eager to forge ahead of them because we wouldn't want to be different. We want to just comfortably blend in with the level of obedience of those around us.

Once we have arrived at this comfortable level of obedience, we push the "cruise-control" button in our hearts, ease back, and relax. Our particular Christian

culture then takes over and keeps us going at the accepted level of conduct. We don't have to watch the speed-limit signs in God's Word, and we certainly don't have to experience the fatigue that comes with seeking to obey Him with all our heart, soul, and mind."

Christian, you are called to obey God to the fullest extent you are capable of accomplishing. Teaching others to obey Christ in discipleship is going to be part of your obedience. Have you been content with letting your discipleship be a Sunday school class or running some program when you are capable of so much more? Are you really loving your neighbor as best you can? What that can look like is filled out by biblical principles we will explore next.

## **THE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES**

Next to the explicit commands to do discipleship we have biblical principles. A biblical principle is a truth derived from a statement in scripture that is not directly linked to you or your exact issue, but still contributes something bearing upon you or your issue. It is within the realm of biblical principle that the specifics of how to do effective life-impacting discipleship are seen.

It is important to note here that the principles seen below help define why preaching and programs cannot stand alone. While almost all of the goals of Scripture can be met in part by preaching and programs, personal discipleship accomplishes these goals in a far fuller way.

### **Biblical discipleship is best done when you are:**

- Loving with life-sharing, life-giving love – Matt 22:39  
Your discipleship must be driven by love that does what is best for the disciple, and dies to self to ensure it happens. This requires entering the life of the disciple as much as

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possible so you can love as much as possible. Sharing life in personal discipleship is no small, easily-accomplished, convenient thing, which means it lines up with what Jesus said was the greatest expression of love; laying down one's life for his friends (Jn. 15:13). Personal discipleship is the context where neighbor-love is fulfilled supremely. Life-sharing, life-giving discipleship is based upon the principle of love.

- Fulfilling all the one another's of scripture

The long list of the "one another's" contain specifics that all of us are called to do for the good of others. While this will happen in the fellowship between all believers, it will happen with greater degree and with greater precision within a discipling relationship. A discipling relationship with consistent contact is based upon the principle of the "one another's."

- Utilizing the power of imitation - Heb. 13; 1 Thess. 1:6, Phil. 3:17; 2 Tim. 3:10, Phil 4:9; 1 Cor. 4:16; 1 Cor. 11:1

Please note the Bible passages referenced. Imitation is important in scripture. The best learning always happens in the context of real life where all the senses are engaged. The numerous commands to imitate leaders and follow examples means the most effective discipleship is the teaching that is observed as well as heard. Bringing a disciple into your life so that obedience can be seen is based upon the principle of imitation.

- Relational – 1 Thess. 2: 7,14; 1 Tim. 1:2a; Titus 1:4a

Paul viewed both Timothy and Titus as his children. To the Thessalonians he described himself like a gentle, nursing mother and a strong, exhorting father. Discipleship seeks to operate according to family-like relationships which are marked by fervent, knowledgeable, and enduring love. Discipleship takes its cue from the principle of deep relationships.

- Equipping others to meet needs - Ex. 18  
Moses was unable to handle all the issues that came before him. He needed other trained men to whom the needs of the nation could be delegated. Teaching people how to serve is discipleship based upon the principle of shared workload.
- Doing life-on-life sharpening – Prov. 27:17  
The rough edges of a person’s life are best sanded down by the presence of another person who is close enough to speak to him, challenge him, and apply the sanctifying truth of God’s word. Discipleship that brings lives into contact with each other is based upon the principle of life-on-life sharpening.
- Bringing biblical counsel – Rom. 15:14  
Paul knew the church in Rome had problems, but they were also well trained and competent to counsel one another. Every Christian can have a counseling ministry of bringing God’s word into the life of another believer. Paul did not see this as only a pastoral job. Discipleship that counsels hope and life into another believer is based upon the principle of every member counseling.

## The Culture-Transforming Power of Multiplication

This chapter will be nothing new for mathematicians, investors, pathologists, or rabbits. Anything that can reproduce itself can spread incredibly quickly. This is the reality that can change a culture. If there was a bit of incredulous eye-rolling as you read the introduction's statement about moving a culture, this chapter offers more explanation. People might grant that an individual can change a life. But we all understand culture, and moving a culture is no small thing. How can discipleship transform a culture?

One person has defined culture as collective heart. Collective heart is where a group of people have the same mind or same commitments or same feelings about the same stuff. There can also be cultures within cultures. Let's look at some of these. Every household has a culture. This reality usually crashes in on the newly-weds who didn't know that two families could do things so differently. You can also find a community culture. This would be that group of people with whom most of your time is spent. You know these people and they know you. There is also a local culture which would be the larger surrounding area where language dialects often tie people together. Then there is the broad national culture where various cultures commit together as a nation, and live under one government. Sometimes a culture can revolt against the other cultures it is around or within, but most of the time we all exist in these layers of culture.

Discipleship can transform one or more layers of culture because discipleship works on the principle of exponential growth. This is the growth that can spread to ever-widening circles of culture. Exponential growth is best understood when compared to growth by addition. Let's say an unusually gifted person was able to lead 100 people to Christ *every day*. In one year, he would have 36,000 converts. Impressive, to say the least. Compare this with an average guy who only leads one person to the Lord that same

year. But, instead of moving on to lead another person to the Lord, he disciplines that new convert in how to do the same thing so they both lead another person to Christ in year two. So, in year two our evangelist has 72,000 converts, and our discipler is one of 4 converts. 4 people seem so weak and unimpressive, which just happens to be God's favorite working environment. Those 4 people are each doing two things, they are reaching another unbeliever with the gospel and they are teaching that convert to follow Christ. This is reproductive, compounding, viral, culture-impacting multiplication, and it is powerful. How powerful? By year 20, the disciplers not only match the number of converts of the evangelist, they fly past it. Every year after that, their number keeps doubling. Don't forget that this assumes the evangelist has unwavering stamina. This also assumes that all the disciplers are only discipling one person a year. Many could probably do more. So, not only has the discipling made more converts in the long haul, it has also obeyed the second half of the great commission.

Finally, the true nature of these scenarios need to be addressed. Concerning the first scenario, there probably has never been an evangelist that personally led 100 people in authentic conversion on a daily basis. But culture-transforming discipleship is another story. It should not be considered unrealistic. Cultures have been changed because of discipleship. Sometimes Spirit-led revival has energized this process and sped it up dramatically. So, while you may or may not see a culture changed while doing discipleship, the above principle still holds true and very well may be used by God to do something surprising.

# Discipling Goals

Every goal in the Christian's life should terminate in the glory of God. That is the ultimate goal of all things. But different ventures will have their own sub-goals that most effectively bring us to the ultimate goal.

Convictions, character, and competence are the key goals a discipler is continually striving to accomplish.<sup>1</sup> They are the broad and Biblically prescribed components of a mature completeness in Christ.

## **CONVICTIONS**

A discipler is always working to build convictions in his disciple. In other words, a discipler is working to move a person to operate as an individual who knows God, knows what God calls him to, and knows his accountability to obey the Lord who owns him.

This means we are talking about **BIBLICAL** convictions. We want our disciple to know what God says in the Bible. We want them to know how to discover what God says in the Bible. We want them to know how a particular passage does and does not apply to them. We must thoroughly ground our disciple in gospel convictions. We help them see the theme of redemption that permeates God's word, and that the Bible isn't an encyclopedia of truth topics, but a story with the triune God as the saving hero. We want them to know there will be a judgment day, exactly what they will give an account for at the judgment (1 Pet. 1:17), and the Savior through whom they will stand blameless (Jude 24).

**The Bible should permeate everything you say to your disciple.** Your disciple should see, over time, that you have actual chapter

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<sup>1</sup> This threefold goal was taken from *The Trellis and the Vine* by Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, page 78.

and verse reasons for why you do what you do, or at least you seek such Biblical guidance. Paul told Timothy that the “church is the pillar and support of the truth...” (1 Tim. 3:10). Therefore, you should view yourself as a display shelf for the Word of God. The Bible is what you are continually holding up before them and opening up with them. Demand that they justify from Scripture what they say and do. Do not let them rest on proof-texts. Instead, insist on well-handled, rightly divided Scriptural support.

Build biblical convictions in your disciple, because God is glorified when we trust that His Word is totally sufficient for all of life and growth in godliness (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3).

## **CHARACTER**

As a discipler is working to build biblical convictions in his disciple, he is at the same time calling them to obey what they already know they should be doing. There will be many areas of immaturity, and the discipler must be careful not to crush them under a demand for full scale change. Jesus understood this of His own disciples and said, “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now” (John 16:12). However, Philippians 3:16 says, “let us keep living by that same *standard* to which we have attained.” The fact is, all of us are inconsistent. We all know of things that we should be doing, but we don’t do them, or vice-versa. The diligent discipler is helping them see these things for what they are, speaking to the reasons why this is happening, and calling them to obedience to Christ and to godly character.

Having convictions without character is an abortion of truth. It is being a hearer of the Word and not a doer, which means at some level there is self-deception happening (James 1:22). This is tantamount to spiritual foot-binding. The Chinese had an ancient custom of wrapping the feet of girls, so they would not grow in size. On the outside they looked dainty and cute, but in reality

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they were simply deformed feet. This is what happens to a person's soul when they are not obeying what they know. Hebrews 5:14 tells us how people become spiritually mature. These are people "who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil." These people were once immature, but chose to regularly obey God's Word at each point they understood. If a person does not do that, they are wrapping their soul with disobedience and stunting their growth.

What a discipler needs is for a disciple to get right in the middle of his particular deception, and bring it to the forefront. He needs someone to explain where the lie exists, where the temptation to believe it is, contrast it with the truth, and call them to trust God and obey.

Build character in your disciple, because God is glorified as a majestic Father when we trust His promises over all others and demonstrate the obedient character that flows from a cheerful, humble heart.

## **COMPETENCE**

As a discipler is working to build convictions and character, he also has an eye toward ministry training. All of us are called to serve. Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45). The greatest among you shall be servant of all. That is what we want for our disciple. We want them to be great. We want them to serve competently. Every person is going to have some area where their convictions and character can be leveraged for ministry in special ways. This is what spiritual gifting is all about.

While a discipler can help a disciple see where an area of gifting exists, finding that certain gift should not be a pressing concern. What should be a pressing concern is that his disciple is serving...somewhere. This is how gifting is realized. A person who is actively serving will find one or more types of service rising to the surface like cream, bringing joy to himself and bearing good

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fruit in others. However, if a person is doing very little, it could be a very, very long time before that particular gifting is found. What a waste of time. What a tragedy.

What better place is there for a disciple to start serving than where his discipler is serving? Whatever that area may be, the discipler should bring him along and train him to serve there with great competence. While it may not be his gifting, there will still be many lessons about serving that will carry over into other areas of service. Discipling gives people a trainer, tools, and needed feedback. These three elements help people take that typically fearful first step into an area of service foreign to them.

Lastly, a disciple needs competence in being a discipler. Every discipler needs to prepare and exhort his disciple to become a discipler himself. When the time is right, help your disciple begin to work with someone in a discipling relationship.

Build competence in your disciple, because God is glorified when we give our lives for others in ways that minister well to real needs.



## Discipling Procedures

With our discipling goals firmly fixed before our eyes...what now?

### **Spend time with them.**

The more time spent the better. This is why parenting is the single greatest discipling context around. In fact, discipling can often be compared to parenting. It is time consuming, difficult, joyous, tedious, thankless, bond-making, perplexing, and brings about change so gradually it is often imperceptible.

Below is a list of activities that can be done with a disciple. Some are highly important; others are good options. There is no particular order, because life is usually too chaotic for that. If your discipleship fits neatly into a scheduled program, you are probably missing important opportunities for discipleship. Don't get me wrong, you need to schedule things, but if that is all the time you spend together it is probably too sterile and artificial.

In reality, many of the activities listed below can happen at the same time. Whatever the case, love your disciple fervently (1 Pet. 1:22). Obligatory discipleship will get really old, really fast.

- Be upfront with your intentions – If you want to intentionally invest teaching and time into someone's life, you should let them know your desire and see if they are interested. Let them know your goals, your initial plans, and what you would expect from them. This way, if they back out sometime after you start, you can address the probable heart issues that have arisen, instead of apologizing for blindsiding them.
- Have them over to your house...often – This is important. The home is the epicenter of normalcy. Who you are at home is who you are. That is what your disciple needs to see. They

need to see Bible application in the normal, mundane, unexpected, and unscripted realities of family.

- Make them your apprentice in your ministry – Whatever you do that is ministry, bring them along. If you set out chairs, have them help you. If you preach, bring them into your preparation; let them see your preaching notes; let them ask questions and bring critiques. Eventually you will need to let them start doing what you do. Watch over them, and help them along. Give much feedback. Protect them from glaring mistakes. Eventually hand the reigns over completely for a period.
- Get to know their family and friends – Enter their world as much as you can. Only then can you really speak to their situation.
- Read a book of the Bible together – This is as simple as it sounds. Pick a book of the Bible, and read it together. Stop and talk about things you see or questions they have. Maybe pick a theme, like the glory of Christ, and discuss it when you see it displayed or taught.
- Read great Christian books & teach them to be a reader – God wants us to love Him with all our minds (Matt. 22), and reading is for engaging the mind. Get a spiritually rich classic or a good systematic theology, and discuss your way through it. For some, reading is difficult. That is ok. Read things together slowly. If your disciple cannot read, read to them while figuring out how to get them this vital skill.
- Do fun things together - You need to laugh together. Fun is one of the greatest bonding agents in life. Even consider going on a vacation together.

- Eat together often – Most people have eating scheduled into the day. It is one of the easiest times to bring a person into your day.
- Ask them lots of questions – Questions are one of the greatest tools for learning. The more you know about them, the more you can pinpoint ways to bring them along in convictions, character, and competence.
- Do evangelism together – This is another must. If you are weak here, just admit it, and grow together. They need to see your love for people and how to pursue them.
- Trade skills – Discipleship does not have to be solely a spiritual enterprise. Kill two birds with one stone. If you know carpentry and your disciple knows engines, teach each other those skills while at the same time talking about life and spiritual issues.
- Speak of your own sin and repentance – They need to know how to deal with sin in their life. They will learn best if they can see repentance in action in your own life. You have done them no favors if you don't "confess your sin one to another" (James 5:16).
- Teach them Bible interpretation – They need to handle the Bible well. Whatever you know in this area, help them learn it too.
- Pray together often – Prayer is the prime indicator of how dependent you feel you are on God and how real your theology is. Let your disciple hear your dependence and your theology ebb and flow through your prayers in every kind of situation.

- Memorize chunks of Scripture together – This spiritual discipline is probably the single greatest fruit bearer outside of regular prayer and Bible reading.

## What Not To Do

We are sinners. We can mess up just about anything. Thinking through the most common ways to sin or be unwise in discipleship can help us avoid big problems.

1. Do not...disciple the opposite gender – This is unwise on multiple levels: Temptation, people's perception, differing roles and applications for those roles, and more.
2. Do not...add discipleship to your calendar – This is an intentional overstatement. Here is why. We are all busy. The American way of life is to cram our day full. That is not necessarily bad...unless we are not doing the best things. Sadly, since many of us were not disciplined by anyone, we never learned to make time in our day to do discipleship, and so the non-discipleship cycle continues. Therefore, **bring a disciple into what you are already doing**. Don't schedule a new thing. Just invite them to join you. Eventually you will begin to make room for this all important task. Start by bringing them into what you are already doing, including time with your family.
3. Do not...do constant Bible study – Don't get me wrong. The Bible, and the study of it, has to have a key place in discipleship. However, if you are only *talking* about Scripture, you are only being half as helpful to your disciple as you could be. Do things. Study, then apply. If your study and discussion are dominated by abstract theology, bring in more practical principles for immediate application. They need, need, need to see/hear it in action in your life. You need to see how it is or is not happening in their life. Get out of the classroom and into the lab of life.

4. Do not...fall into the two errors of confidentiality – Confidentiality is like a road with two very deep ditches. On one side is the ditch of betrayed confidentiality. Proverbs is clear that revealing secrets is an evil practice. Proverbs 11:13 says, “...but he who is trustworthy conceals a matter.” See also Proverbs 20:19; 25:9. Both you and your disciple must have complete confidence that what is shared stays between the two of you. If this confidence is betrayed, it will be very difficult to restore a discipling relationship. On the other side of the road of confidentiality is the ditch of unqualified confidentiality. In the zeal to establish trust and create an atmosphere of sharing, people will sometimes promise that they will never tell anyone what is shared. This is very foolish. The Bible says, as in Matthew 18:15-20, there will be times when you have to tell others what has been said or done. To promise you will not do that destroys discipleship, because it models disobedience. In matters of clear and persistent unrepentant sin, criminal activity, where the lives and safety of your disciple or others are endangered, or other such serious matters, you must tell the appropriate people. Never promise that you will keep such secrets. Let your disciples know up front that confidentiality is extremely important to you, but if something has to be shared for biblical reasons, you are bound to obey God and do what is best for their good.
  
5. Do not...create an inward mentality – This can happen in small groups and in a discipleship relationship. You begin to foster a mentality that what is going on in the discipling relationship is the only thing worthwhile in the church. “The other church people are nice, but they are not on our level”, so your disciple thinks. You are not his savior, and you are not all he needs. In fact, personal discipleship doesn’t have to be only one person investing in an individual. Multiple people can cultivate a discipling

relationship with a single person. There is a body of believers to be loved and who can also give great help. Cultivate humility, a desire for relationships with many types of people in the church, and an outward-looking servanthood.

6. Do not...make your disciple dependent on you

It has been said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Discipleship can create a tempting situation for the discipler. There are few things more irresistible than being flattered, needed, and looked up to. Pride is always lurking within the human heart. It is never a question of if pride is in you, but how much and how is it manifested. In discipleship, it is possible for a person's pride to find a godly-looking place to call home. Without realizing it, a discipler could be building in a person the impulse to look to him for answers, direction, protection, comfort, etc. This should never be the goal or result. While there will be a degree of serving others in these ways, especially for young believers, the goal is always Christ-dependence. At every opportunity, a discipler must be training the disciple to follow and depend upon Christ. If you are able to provide an answer or some helpful guidance, let your disciple know that Christ was the source of it, thereby deflecting the dependence. Teach them how you were able to find that answer or guidance in Christ and His Word. Be diligent to keep pointing them to Christ, and moving them to look to the Bible and gospel realities.

7. Do not...let your disciple take your questionable tendencies and magnify them – This is a great danger. As

Luke 6:40 says, “everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.” This is not bad. This is the way it is supposed to be. However, we are all flawed. It is not uncommon for our flaws or idiosyncrasies to be picked up and then magnified by those following us. Watch for this.

Warn against it. Always be looking for how your disciple will take your teaching or practice one step too far.

8. Do not...forget to exhort them to disciple others – It can be easy to forget the end goal. The end goal isn't just the person sitting in front of you. It is people from every nation, tribe, and tongue worshipping God. This happens best by the exponential growth mentioned in the chapter on culture transformation. You need to be looking beyond the person you are discipling by preparing your disciple to disciple someone else. You must not let them fall back into the consumer mindset. That mindset says receiving from you is the end goal. No. They are receiving in order to give. You must be reminding them that soon they will need to find someone to disciple, and they must train and exhort that person to disciple someone also. Do not let a good discipling cycle end with your disciple.
9. Do not...try to disciple too many people at once – Jesus only disciplined twelve guys, and they lived together all day, every day for nearly three years. Start with one person, and add more as you see you have the time and ability to pour into more people.
10. Do not...undermine the authority and responsibility of a teenager's parents – The teen years are critical years for discipleship. Those years are filled with new temptations, new opportunities, new transitions, and new questions. Being disciplined through those years, especially by multiple disciplers, can help a teen thrive and grow to the glory of God. One of those disciplers should be their parent. Teenagers living at home are still under the care and authority of their parents by the command of God, regardless of the spiritual state of the parents. As parents and teens interact in the daily routines of life, discipleship is happening whether realized or not. It might be a



defective discipleship void of biblical truth and godly example, or a deficient discipleship done half-heartedly, but it is discipleship nonetheless. Whether or not the parent is doing what they should, it is good for other disciplers to be in a teen's life. However, the other disciplers must not undermine or ignore the parent's God-given role in the teen's life. To do that is to cultivate a disregard for authority, which is counterproductive to making a Christ-following disciple. Let the teen know upfront that their parent is the one to whom the discipler is accountable and responsible. While there can and should be a level of confidentiality (see #4), if something needs to be shared, it will be shared with a parent first. Periodically updating parents of the overall progress is honoring to the parents and their authority. This can also serve as an unspoken reminder to the parents that they are to be doing this as well.



## Questions To Be Asking

As mentioned previously, questions are one of the greatest tools of learning. A good question can sometimes unlock a door of understanding that had long remained closed. Someone has defined intimacy as “in-to-me-see.” If you want a robust relationship with someone, questions will help people see into you and you see into them.

If you want to see your disciple grow and mature, becoming complete in Christ, you will have to know them well. The only way to love them well is to know them well. Asking questions will help you learn what they think, what they do, and why they do it.

Below are categories of starter questions to prime your pump.

### Marriage

- What do you do with your spouse spiritually?
- How would you rate your marriage?
- What areas would you like/need to improve?
- What could you regularly do that would immensely bless your spouse?

### Family

- What is the communication like in your home?
- What normally threatens the harmony of your home?
- What kind of spiritual conversations do you have with your kids? How often?
- Does your family have a worship/devotion time? How often? What does it look like?
- What are you doing to individually connect with your children: to know them, train them, and bless them?

### Work

- What is your reputation at work?

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- What challenges are there to living biblically at work?
- What does your boss think about you?
- Does your job meet your needs financially?
- How are you guarding yourself as you work with the opposite sex?

### Temptations

- What are your areas of greatest temptation?
- What plans do you have in place for dealing with temptation?
- What Scripture do you use for your temptations?
- When you fall into sin, what happens to your spiritual life?

### Fears

- Do you fear man in any area?
- What would cause you the greatest struggle if God took away something precious?
- What holds you back from doing what God is leading you to do?

### Evangelism

- Do you know how to share the gospel, and how do you go about it?
- Who are you reaching out to, and how are you going about it?
- Are you building relationships with your neighbors, co-workers, and friends? How? If not, why?
- What are your greatest obstacles for sharing the gospel?

### Theology

- How well do you know the Christian faith?
- What concepts about God or His Word are the greatest mystery/struggle/difficulty for you?

### Personal

- How do you use your leisure time and disposable cash?

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- Why are you right with God?
- What realities of the gospel are you applying to your life right now?
- What are your devotions like?
- How do you make decisions?
- How do you maintain your walk with Christ, and where is it now?
- What kind of ministry are you involved in? Do you know your spiritual gifting?
- Are you at peace with everyone in your life?
- Is there anything you think God may be calling you toward?



## Common Objections & Questions

Because discipleship is inherently difficult, and rarely modeled effectively, there are a host of objections and questions that come to people's minds. Here are a few common ones.

- 1) I have too many other commitments and too little time to add this.

This was addressed briefly in the "What Not To Do" section. As stated in that section, you probably can find a way to bring a person into some of your activities. However, you might be the person who says you have too many commitments and too little time. The bigger issue is you simply do not have a commitment to love your neighbor in the best possible way. You might be doing lots of things that are loving for your neighbor, but I believe you will be hard-pressed to do something *more* loving than life-on-life discipleship. The second greatest commandment, bolstered and propelled by Christ's great commission, makes discipleship one of the most important commitments you will ever make. If your schedule is too full, get out your pen, write down all your commitments, and cut out whatever it takes to give time for discipleship. Cut those things with low biblical importance but call for much time. You may even have to cut one of your bigger commitments - something that will be a real sacrifice for you. Make time to love your neighbor in the most impactful way: Life-on-life discipleship.

- 2) I'm an introvert, and engaging with people like this is extremely difficult.

Different personality types will have their own special challenges and difficulties. Introverts find that the more they engage with people the more emotionally/physically/mentally drained they become. However, there is no personality type that is excluded from the commands of Scripture. Introverts are called to

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evangelize, disciple, and speak the truth in love. Extroverts are called to be slow to speak, to meditate on God's Word, and to put others ahead of themselves. We all are going to find some things more difficult than others. Recognize, however, that while we are all called to the same obedience, our obedience is going to look different. The extrovert may have a handful of disciples they hang out with all the time. The introvert might focus on one person to whom he can dedicate his energies. The extrovert might meet with people spontaneously and talk into the wee hours of the morning. The introvert might have highly scheduled times that are as predictable as the rising sun. All of these scenarios have their benefits and drawbacks, and every person will want to beware of refusing to adjust. The introvert will sometimes need to be spontaneous, and the extrovert will sometimes need to be scheduled. Accept how God made you, realize the difficulties that will come with it, and be ready to make sacrifices that stretch you in the name of neighborly love and the kingdom of Christ.

### 3) I don't know enough to disciple someone.

For those in a church that has a high view of God's Word and rightly dividing it, this will be a common thought. People in this kind of church know that God's Word is deep and rich, and you had better know what you are talking about if you are going to say Scripture says this or that. That is a good thing, but if wrongly understood it can also be paralyzing. As stated above, God's Word is the central tool in the discipling task. We want to make biblical Christians with biblical convictions. But what if you have an incomplete grasp of Scripture? Here are four things to remember.

First, remember that being a mature Christian is not the requirement for being a discipler; being a *maturing* Christian is the requirement. If you confess the Lordship of Christ and are serious about following Him, you can and should disciple someone. You don't have to have all the answers; you simply need to know where to turn to find them, which is God's Word.



Second, even if you came to Christ yesterday, there will very soon be someone who is younger than you in the faith. Look for someone who might know a little less than you, and meet with them.

Third, simply because you cannot speak exhaustively on a particular Scripture does not mean you cannot speak something true about it. All of Scripture is clear (even though there are some difficult parts), and most of the Scripture is easily understood. A basic interpretive principle is that the simplest and clearest explanation of a passage is correct, unless there is a compelling reason to see it otherwise. As an unbeliever once said, "Most people are bothered by those passages of Scripture they do not understand, but the passages that bother me are those I do understand."

Fourth, remember it is more important to be able to apply scripture than it is to explain it exhaustively. You do have to explain it before you can apply it, but some of the hardest difficulty is applying it to the day to day life of you and your disciple. Jesus said you are to teach them to obey Scripture, not just know Scripture. If you can't explain lots of Scripture, focus on applying the parts you can. This will be invaluable to your disciple.

- 4) I have considerable sin that I am still dealing with in my own life. Should I, or should I not, disciple someone?

This is a very important question with three distinct answers.

First, we must realize that until we die or Christ returns, all Christians will struggle with sin. Paul's longing was to be "freed from this sinful body of death" (Rom. 7:24). These sin issues are real, and they are going to cause problems. We don't want to play nice with any sin. It all needs to be put to death. But, the fact that you are putting sin to death is one of the most important features of your discipleship. Your disciple needs to see repentance and faith lived out by you in real ways. Your sin issues are the battle ground where a disciple can learn how to wage his

own warfare against the flesh. So, regarding sin that is being dealt with in a daily walk of repentance and faith, this does not disqualify you from discipleship.

Second, there is sin that disqualifies someone from discipleship. It is less about the particular sin and more about the attitude that enforces it. Any time a Christian is living in such a way that there are more questions about their view of the Lordship of Christ than there are confirmations of it, there is a serious problem. Whether revealed by a particularly heinous sin (which is always the culmination of smaller decisions and thinking) or the unrepentant persistence of a sinful lifestyle, such a person is not following Christ. So they can't say "follow me as I follow Christ." This person should not be discipling anyone.

Third, there is a very difficult middle ground. When does a person cross the line between having a common sin issue and a disqualifying sinful lifestyle? This can be hard to discern at times. The best answer will probably be found in how they are putting that sin to death. Are they seriously dealing with it, or are they just tinkering with repentance? In a best case scenario, this person in question will have a discipler in his own life, along with a shepherding church elder who is going to be involved. Those godly men can give needed direction. If such people are not there to counsel and direct, it would be wise to postpone disciple-making until leaders in a church can affirm that such a person is following Christ and worthy to disciple others.

## 5) Whom should I disciple?

You need to pray about this. Jesus spent a whole night in prayer before choosing His 12 disciples (Luke 6:12-13). Fervently ask God to open your eyes to someone already in your sphere of life or to bring a person into your life who needs discipling. As you are praying, are there things to be looking for in a candidate?

First, do you know anybody who is not being disciplined? This is almost like asking, "Do you know anyone who has needs?" There are countless people who have never had a person devote time

and energy to help them grow. If this person is a part of your church, great, but I see no biblical demand for this.

Second, is this person a Christian? Remember, the goals of discipleship are convictions, character, and competence. An unbeliever will never have biblical convictions, godly character, or Spirit-empowered competence. If they are not a Christian, then this is someone to evangelize, not disciple. However, sometimes we are simply not sure where a person is spiritually, even if they are a member of a church. Ask if you can begin meeting with them, and use the first several meetings to ascertain where they are spiritually. If they are not saved, then keep meeting with them to explain the gospel. By God's grace they will come to Christ, and you will have your first brand-new disciple. However, if they are not interested in following Christ, the discipling process has ended. Let them know you would still like to spend time, or even to meet and talk of spiritual issues and questions, but intentional discipling is not for those who won't follow Christ.

Third, is this person spiritually less mature than you are? Are you able to pour truth into their life which they don't have? There needs to be some kind of spiritual maturity gap.

Fourth, while your discipleship will be easier and more fun if you find someone like yourself, don't limit candidates to those who are a lot like you. At times, God will put someone in your life who needs discipleship, and they will be very different from you. They will think differently, act differently, and have different standards. For discipleship to work, you will need to apply the love-empowering gospel often. You will have many opportunities to show grace, ask forgiveness, and demonstrate how a difference of opinion is handled between Christians.

Fifth, look for a teachable person. You want to find a person who desires to follow Christ and will listen when Christ's words are being explained. Those who are uninterested in following Christ and unwilling to listen to those who take the Lordship of Christ seriously won't be a disciple for long. A disciple is a learner. That is the definition of the word. Therefore, if they won't learn, they won't be a disciple.

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## 6) Could I disciple someone significantly older than me?

Sadly, there are far too many Christians who have been saved for decades, but they are still spiritual children and spiritual teenagers. Their spiritual growth has been stunted by the neglect of discipleship, among other things. Therefore, it is likely that you will find physically older people who need the truths that have already changed you. The younger person will want to be wise when discipling someone older. Strive for extraordinary humility. Show them the respect that comes with age. In fact, you will want to deliberately, conspicuously, and gratefully learn the wisdom they have gleaned from life experiences you have not had yet. However, the awkwardness could be too much in some circumstances, like a young adult discipling a 55 year old.

## 7) How long should discipleship last?

Discipleship never ends in a person's life. Ideally, someone should be discipling and being disciplined all the time. We can always learn something from any of God's children, but the time will come when the disciple has a good grasp of the convictions, character, and competence of the discipler. How long this takes is dependent upon varying factors of each relationship. How different were the maturity levels of the two people? How much time did they spend together? What types of materials did they go through together? How well was their time used? Sometimes the discipleship can conclude in six months. Other people may spend years together. The disciple may or may not then come under another discipler. What is most important is that they now disciple someone else, if they haven't already begun doing so.

## 8) What if a person doesn't want discipleship?

There are probably two main reasons, and neither is going to be easy to handle.

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The first reason is the person doesn't want to be disciplined by you. For some reason they do not want you to have this role in their life. Maybe they don't like your personality. Maybe they have seen sin in your life, and they fear it may be symptomatic of larger issues. Maybe they would really rather have someone else disciple them. Maybe you will never know. Whatever the reason, if you are not humble, it will be hard to handle. Strive to be more concerned for their spiritual growth than your wounded ego. Pray for them. Suggest some other godly people who would serve them well.

The second reason is even more difficult. A person may be quite content with spiritual immaturity. They don't want to waste time with a discipling relationship. They don't want the accountability. They don't want to put that kind of effort into growth that seems unnecessary to them. There are two main steps to take here. First, if you can see clear evidence of places where growth is needed, ask them why they are uninterested in growth. Since this is not a situation of clear sin, this is not the first step of the Matthew 18 discipline process. Instead, you simply care for your brother and want to love them in Christ. Second, after you have spoken with them, and their response does not inspire confidence, you will want to mention it to those who have been given charge over their souls according to Hebrews 13:17. The pastors or elders should pursue that person, and shepherd them along appropriately.



## Prepare For A Mess

There is a reason why discipleship is not the norm in most churches. It is messy. It takes lots of time, prayer, and hard thinking. It is often accompanied by heartache, long conversations, misunderstandings, and conflict. There is just nothing easy about sharing real life.

Programs are a different story. They are pre-packaged, they have start and stop times, they are one-directional, they can be run by one person, and most people can stay comfortably in the back and be an observer. They are cake-walks compared to life-on-life discipleship. Since we are a culture drunk on entertainment and laced with consumerist thinking, programs fit nicely into our way of life.

Like vitamins, programs can serve a purpose and be very beneficial. Yet, you would never think of just living off of the multivitamin in your cabinet. Many people are trying to do community life by living off of programs. We simply were not designed for that. We are relational. We need to watch people, and we need people in our lives who can ask us hard questions.

So, prepare for this to be hard. It is not going to be clean cut and sterilized. Remember the parenting analogy. Discipleship is like parenting. There will be spaghetti all over the floor and in the hair; count on it. There will be disappointments, big and small. There will be great joys, but there will also be hard decisions and perplexing situations that will drive you to your knees before God asking for help. But this is where God wants you: Dependent, humble, praying, sacrificing, and putting your hope in the transformative power of the gospel - not your own abilities and plans. But if you persevere, if you make disciples who make disciples, your life will have an exponentially larger ripple effect throughout eternity to the glory of God. What could be better than that? Nothing!

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## The Single Easiest Way To Begin Discipling

If this booklet has done its job, you should be feeling one of two things. For some people, they may now feel the need to be disciplined by someone. I encourage you to ask a godly Christian to take up this role for you. This will most likely put you on an exciting path of growth. For many other people, what they may now feel is far more intimidating. They may now be feeling the burden to carry out the great commission in the fullest possible way, which means they should be personally discipling someone. They have been in the church and in God's Word enough to be able do something to help a less mature Christian. However, the thought of personally discipling someone is still foreign and uncomfortable.

If that is you, I want to help you think about how to ease into this role. No one starts as a master of anything, so give yourself permission to start small, to make mistakes, and to be uncomfortable. If it is worth doing, it is worth doing poorly...at first. What is done poorly at first will be honed and perfected over time if one is humble and faithful. God does not despise the day of small things and neither should you (Zech. 4:10).

So what is the easiest way to start? The easiest way to start is to read the Bible with someone. By simply doing this one thing you will have taken a wonderful step in discipleship. How so?

You will have:

- Demonstrated love by seeking them out.
- Demonstrated stewardship of time by putting them into your schedule.
- Demonstrated a love for God's word, since you show a desire to read it more yourself.
- Demonstrated a confidence in God's living and active Word, since you are not dressing it up or bringing in any other materials.

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By simply reading God's word with someone, without commentary or questions, you will have been a model of one who delights in God's word. That example has taught them something extremely valuable; God's Word is precious.

Now, God's Word is powerful and before long something is going to happen. They are going to ask a question. Something is going to strike them as powerful and they will want to know what to do about that. Or something will strike them as perplexing and they will want an explanation. Either way, this is good because truth is being pursued. Maybe you will even know the answer. But even if you don't, you have two actions to take. First, go with them in prayer before God. Plead with God for wisdom. Beseech the throne of grace for help in what to do. This will be another powerful example for the disciple. They will see what it looks like to depend upon God. The second course of action is to start to answer the question. Show them how to look up other passages in scripture. Teach them how to seek out godly counsel. Talk to them about what makes for a trustworthy resource.

After time, you will want to try to aim at the other goals of discipleship; character and competence. You will want to try to incorporate other activities to speed discipleship along, and bring in other resources that exalt Christ and His Word. You may do those poorly at first. But press on, soldier. In all of this you will be personally discipling a younger Christian, and this is what God has called you to. He will use your obedience in ways you would never dream of.

# Appendix 1

## A Discippler's Daily Itinerary

By: Jonathan Leeman

[Editorial note: Please understand that the following itinerary is for illustrative purposes only. It is not intended to convey that you should be discipling four different people at four different times in every day of your week. Instead, it is showing different settings and different options for when and where discipleship can happen.]

It is one thing to say that Christians should be involved in discipling relationships. It is another thing to figure out what this looks like practically. When do you do it? How do you do it? What does it look like?

I have addressed some of these questions in this booklet. But, in order to present as clear a picture as possible, here is what a day's schedule might look like for a typical Christian husband and father who has heard Jesus' call to be a fisher of men.

6:00 a.m. Shower & dress

6:30 a.m. Devotions: Bible reading & praying. Pray for family, day's events, discipling relationships, evangelistic opportunities, the church, etc.

7:00 a.m. Help kids get ready

7:30 a.m. Meet fellow church member Paul at nearby coffee shop for breakfast; discuss chapter of D. A. Carson book; discuss marriage and parenting; ask about his other Christian and non-Christian relationships

8:30 a.m. Work

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12:30 p.m. Lunch with non-Christian co-worker; discuss faith

1:30 p.m. Work

5:30 p.m. Pick up items at store for dinner for wife; bring Ken, single man in the church who lives nearby. Ask deliberate questions about his life.

6:30 p.m. Dinner; family worship; play with kids; bedtime routine

8:45 p.m. Dessert with wife and the Smiths in the living room, a younger couple in the church who are struggling in their marriage; conversations about marriage and prayer

10:15 p.m. Prayer with wife and bed.

On the one hand, that schedule is all very neat. Life never quite fits into 30 and 60 minute blocks. You know that. Any given day might have more time with family, doing home repair, taking kids to swim lesson, working late, or a hundred other things.

Still, it gives you the picture of a fairly average discipler. Nothing exceptional or groundbreaking, but hopefully faithful and deliberate amidst the many stewardships of life that God gives. Four touch points outside the family (breakfast, lunch, errand, dessert) might be unusual—one to three would be more typical. And some days, there might be none.

*Jonathan Leeman, a member of Capitol Hill Baptist Church, is the editorial director of 9Marks and is the author of Church Membership: How the World Knows Who Represents Jesus.*

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## Appendix 2

### Resources

The following list is a starting point for resources you could use with your disciple.

Bible - This is the most important resource that you must be using in some way. If your disciple is a new Christian, you will probably want to use this exclusively. They need to begin to read God's Word, and you can help them begin to see its importance as you go through it together. However, going through a Bible book is a good option no matter the level of maturity of who you are with.

Christianity Explained – This is a good resource for those who still have questions and new believers who need further grounding.

The Gospel Primer for Christians - by Milton Vincent. This is an excellent resource for getting grounded in the gospel, and why it is so important to preach it to yourself every day for the rest of your life.

Fifty Reasons Jesus Came to Die – by John Piper. This will help your disciple see the riches that are bound up in the gospel.

The Keys to Spiritual Growth - by John MacArthur. Since growth is the accumulation of building convictions, character, and competence, this book will fill out building blocks for accomplishing each one.

Ten Questions to Diagnose your Spiritual Health – by Donald Whitney. This resource provides not only great questions to ask with your disciple, but also delves into the ins and outs of working toward the right answers to those questions.

Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life – by Donald Whitney. Convictions and character will emerge out of the spiritual habits that one establishes. This resource defines what habits (disciplines) are biblical, why they are so important, and how to grow in them.

How Can I Change? - by C.J. Mahaney & Robin Boisvert. This book gives hope and help for the struggle that every believer is going to face in his battle with personal sin.

Systematic Theology – by Wayne Grudem. This is a more contemporary theological work which is thorough, yet accessible to the average reader.

The Godly Man's Picture – by Thomas Watson. The Puritans left us with a wealth of biblically rich works that probe the soul. Thomas Watson is perhaps one of the easiest to read due to his vivid and picturesque writing. This book provides countless opportunities for self-examination.

