

Men's Retreat 2008
SESSION 1 **"Getting Off on the Right Foot"**

INTRO ... Discipleship as a "GOVERNING PRINCIPLE" in Life

- *What Might You Identify as the
"Governing Principle" of Your Life?*

Governing Principle = a thought or way of thinking about yourself or your life that serves to guide who you are and are who you are seeking to become.

Matt 28:18-20 as a "GOVERNING PRINCIPLE" in Life

Why Start with This Verse?

.... *Discovering You're a Human Being not a HOUSE PET FRAMES Your Existence*
" " " *DISCIPLE* " *NATURAL MAN* " " "

— **Anything that Rises up to Supplant this Purpose needs to be seen as UN-EMBRACEABLE—**

It raises the question that if being a Disciple is out of place in our lives, can we truly have much confidence that we are fulfilling the will of God for our lives as individuals (fathers, employees, neighbors, husbands, etc.)? — We do not discover merely that we are dads, husbands, salesmen, business owners; we discover that we're DISCIPLE-dads, DISCIPLE-husbands, DISCIPLE-salesmen, DISCIPLE-students....

Matt 28:18-20 Famous Last Words: *Jesus' Last few **APPEARANCES** to His disciples were very **MISSION RELATED***

CONTEXT: (v. 16-17)

- *They are in Galilee*
- *Some have doubts—*

.... *What, therefore were they Doubting? ... What are they doing in Galilee?*

*Is there some "floundering" going on? They have returned to "fishing" on the Sea of Galilee (Matt 4:21-22, Jn 21) (Remember at least 6 of the disciples are from Galilee — Have They Gone **Back to WHAT's FAMILIAR?**)*

The "GREAT COMMISSION" is given against the backdrop of their need for CLARITY ABOUT THEIR MISSION— What Do You We Do With Our Lives NOW?

..... How Many Christians are Needing CLARITY @ Their MISSION in Life? — Too many "Get Saved" but don't quite figure out what to do next with their Christian Lives.

Matt 28:18-20

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore..."

The Cross Event is the Cure for the CANCER of DEATH— it is the EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION!! ...What Jesus did on the Cross has changed the FUTURE for Man!! It's ENORMOUS GOOD NEWS is the Driving Force of a Disciple's Existence!

Heb 2:14-15 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

Col 2:8-15 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. 13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Acts 26:16-18 I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, ... 18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

- The outcome or consequence of what Jesus has accomplished is that the Door of the Great Commission is NOW OPEN
- What is primary for the Christian who is living in the good of Jesus Accomplishment? — it is clearly, GOSPEL EXPANSION. It's NOT just, "Go and have a good life"... "Go, live long and prosper" ...

“ Authority = *exousia* (Gk.) = Power over persons and things, dominion, authority, rule. (from The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament)

"the right to exercise power"

- Christ AUTHORITY gives Him the right over us to Command us to go
- " " " " " the lost to Summon Them to Come

“ Because of that authority, his followers may go in confidence that their Lord is in sovereign control of “everything in heaven and on earth.”” D.A. Carson, “Expositors Bible Commentary”, vol 8, p. 595

"Disciples" - This is an Extremely Important Word for Our PERSONAL Walk & our CHURCH MISSION!! — It Informs Our EXPECTATIONS about Our Own Lives and what we are Called to See Formed in Others. It **informs our MISSION.**

Embracing Discipleship is about getting off on the right foot in 2 main areas of understanding:

1. Disciples are Learners
2. Disciples have Gained Life by Losing Their Life

1. DISCIPLES ARE LEARNERS

What is a DISCIPLE? ("disciple" is used 250 times in gospels & Acts)

DISCIPLE = mathetes (Gk.) – A learner, pupil. Mathetes means more in the NT than a mere pupil or learner. It is an adherent who accepts the instruction given to him and makes it his rule of conduct, [it is a noun formed from manthano (Gk.) which means to learn, to understand],
– from The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament

mathetes – lit., "a learner" (from manthano, "to learn," from a root math—, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor)
– from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

mathetes is used for those who direct their minds to something. It then denotes the "pupil" as one engaged in learning.
– from Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

At the Core of Christianity is LEARNING!! Christians are LEARNERS who are seeking to Understand & Apply what they are taught!

John 8:31-33 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John 15:4-8 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ... 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

– **Matt 11:29** ... "Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn (manthano) of Me ... and you will find rest for your souls

Is Christianity Remaining True to It's Core Principle Today?

- Churches Aiming at PROGRAMS Rather Than Discipleship
- Too Much Learning the Wrong Information — Learning in the INFORMATION AGE

There is MUCH Riding on What We KNOW, BELIEVE, & APPLY

“ Scripture transforms the mind of the Christian (Rom 12:2). People may change the way they think and react for a number of reasons— external events, emotional experiences, or cognitive principles may influence them— but all such changes must be routed through the mind. That is why it is so important for Christians to have a working knowledge of Scripture. They should

memorize and meditate on it and be able to defend and explain their faith from it.... Today's evangelical church has come to its anemic state primarily because of widespread ignorance of scriptural truth. Uninformed Christians do not have a well programmed grid from which to make good choices." **Bill Hull**, "The Disciple-making Church", p. 65

The Life we Have Today is a Result of the Choices We Made Yesterday....

2. DISCIPLES HAVE GAINED LIFE BY LOSING THEIR LIFE

How Did Jesus Christ Present Discipleship ("Mathetes")? What Would the 1st Disciples Have Understood about Discipleship?

Lk 14:25-33

"whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple"

Matt 16:25 Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it

"When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**, "The Cost of Discipleship", p. 7

"For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost"

"Jesus has no desire to trick you into following him with a kind of bait and switch. He is utterly up front about the cost, in fact he urges you to count the cost. ... Let the call to follow Jesus be clear and honest.... It is costly, and it is worth it." **John Piper**, "What Jesus Demands from the World", p. 74

"Any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple"

"Salvation is free, but discipleship costs everything we have." **Billy Graham**

GETTING OFF ON THE RIGHT FOOT the Importance of Initial TRAJECTORY

"...thousands of people still ignore Christ's warning and undertake to follow him without first pausing to reflect on the cost of doing so. The result is the great scandal of Christendom today, so-called 'nominal Christianity'. In countries to which Christian civilization has spread, large numbers of people have covered themselves with a decent, but thin, veneer of Christianity. They have allowed themselves to become somewhat involved; enough to be respectable but not enough to be uncomfortable." **John Stott**, "Basic Christianity", p. 116

- Has Your Christianity Called You to Regularly Embrace DISCOMFORT?

- CHANGE —
- STRETCHING —

"Discipleship Demands our All. The PROSPECT of Becoming a Christian should be a strange combination of Deep Witness + Hesitation. (We know we must and we truly want to, but then there's parts of our lives that don't want to be messed with) "

" The most important word I think Jesus ever said about becoming a disciple was Luke 14:27, "Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple." Bearing a cross does not mean primarily having hard times. It means going to Golgotha. It means dying with Christ—dying to the old attitudes of envy and strife and jealousy and anger and selfishness and pride; and turning to follow Jesus in newness of life. When we make disciples, we bid people to come and die to their old, destructive ways and to live for Jesus, who loved them and gave himself for them."**"**
John Piper, "Go and Make Disciples, Baptizing Them..."