

SESSION 3 ... "Disciples Make Disciples"

Right now I'm wondering, if we church people have forgotten how to raise saints. And if the question is worthy, then what's been going wrong? Bad preaching? Shallow books? Too much emphasis on a problem-solving, self-help kind of faith?

Maybe the answer is deeper or more profound than that. Perhaps it has to do with the penchant in churches (the last forty years or so) to package everything into programs. You need programs to make large churches go: kind of like the automakers need an assembly line that stamps out fenders as fast as possible.

I suspect you can do evangelism programmatically. And you can do infant-level discipleship in programs. Just put the information in little booklets and get groups going. It can be done.

But mature Christians do not grow through programs or through the mesmerizing delivery of a talented speaker or worship band. Would-be saints are mentored: one-on-one or, better yet, one-on-small group (three to twelve was Jesus' best guess). The mentoring takes place in the streets and living-places of life, not church classrooms or food courts. And it's not necessarily done in Bible studies or the like. Mature Christians are made one by one through the influence of other Christians already mature.

Additionally, mature Christians become mature by suffering, facing challenges that can arouse fear and a sense of inadequacy. Mature Christians learn to wrestle with questions that defy simple answers. They learn to say strategic and tactical "no's" when others are indulging themselves by saying "yes." Oh, and mature Christians wrestle against the devil, you could say, and sometimes even lose. But they learn to get up again. Could I add, while I'm on a roll, that mature Christians are experts at repenting and humility.

Again, they learn this stuff under the tutelage of one who has gone before them and is willing to open his/her life so that it becomes a textbook on Christ's work in us.

But we have a rising (I daresay, a life-threatening) problem in the modern church. Older people—above 50, let's say—don't want to be tutors or mentors. Too busy, too distracted, too secretive, too afraid. So a younger generation of spiritual infants is really struggling because an older generation doesn't want to tell its stories, doesn't want to get involved. They prefer Christian cruises, Christian golf tournaments, and more Bible studies where information can be piled upon information.

Forgive my generalizations, my edgy sarcasm. But I'm prompted to let some of my thoughts hang out because I'm meeting too many infant Christians who tell me that they're looking for fathers and mothers in the faith to help them grow up. And they're not finding them. And many churches aren't cultivating them.

Result: we could lose a large part of a new generation of Christians who couldn't get past spiritual infancy and went somewhere else.

Gordon MacDonald, "Leaders Insight: So Many Christian Infants", Leadership Journal © 2007

Matt 28:18-20

THE PERSON OF CHRIST MAKING DISCIPLES

Jesus Order of Ministry

1. "Come" – the Invitation
2. "Go" – the Mission

1. "COME"

● "Come and See"

What is it that FUELS our Going? it is the Impact that ENCOUNTERING Christ has had on us.

Jn 1:43-46

Jn 4:28-29 ... the Woman at the well

"Taste and see that the Lord is good"

● "Come to Me... take my yoke and LEARN (manthano) of Me"

- **Learn of the "GLORY" (kabod) of God:** His LOVE Holiness... Mercy ... Judgement ... Compassion Wrath ... Perfection
- **Learn of the Ordinances & Decrees of God:** the LAW ... the Appointment of Coming Judgement ...
- **Learn the WAYS of God:** Revealed in His dealings with Israel and the peoples of the O.T.
- **Learn the BURDEN & MISSION of God**

Matt 9:35-38 And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; 38 therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

2. "GO... AND MAKE DISCIPLES"

What Was to be Involved in Disciple-making?

- EMPOWERMENT ... Lk 10:1-20; Lk 24:49; Acts 1:8
- WITNESS Acts 1:8
 - "Baptizing them" (Matt 28:19) = New Converts
- TEACHING Matt 28:18-19
- OBEDIENCE Matt 28:20
 - “ If we have not taught obedience and encouraged it through accountability, we have not discipled.” **Bill Hull**, "The Disciplemaking Church", p. 22

- FRUIT-BEARING Jn 15
 - *REPRODUCTION/DUPLICATION*

“ I started this chapter asking the question, “Why is our discipleship only in-house and non-reproductive?” The answer is because we have not taught or expected people we train to reproduce.” **Bill Hull**, “Jesus Christ Disciplemaker”, p. 20
 - *MATURITY*

“ Discipleship involves bringing people to Christ and leading them to maturity.” **John MacArthur**, “The Master’s Plan for the Church,” p. 63

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST MAKING DISCIPLES

Eph 4:7-16 The N.T. Church Discipleship Program

- v. 7-8** God Has Given Grace (Divine Enablement) to EACH OF US — In Order to Accomplish the GREAT COMMISSION
- v. 11** The Dispensing & DISPERSING of Leadership Gifts — (Jesus was the Embodiment of All of these)
- v. 12** The Purpose of the Gifts —

“Equipping the saints, so that they can do the work of the ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up”

This is Disciplemaking — Consider it’s Aims (v. 12-16)

- 1. People Being Added to the Church**
- 2. People Growing to Maturity**
 - We’re able to walk together in UNITY (like minded in purpose and manner of living)
 - We’re increasing in our knowledge of Him
 - We’re no longer children in our spiritual understandings (tossed around by ideas and philosophies; lacking convictions; vulnerable to what’s popular)
 - Speaking truth to each other in love (able to bring instruction and even correction to each other)
- 3. People Doing the Work of Ministry** (v. 12, 16)

“ Discipling is a function that everyone must be involved in. It isn’t optional. We’re all to bring people to the knowledge of the Savior and go through the process of helping them mature. We’re all to disciple whomever the Lord brings across our path. You will probably have different kinds of relationships with the people you disciple, but discipleship is nothing more than building a friendship with a spiritual basis.” **John MacArthur**, “The Master’s Plan for the Church,” p. 63

- Everyone is functioning in Disciplemaking— but as PARTS Not

"INDIVIDUAL WHOLES" ... Disciplemaking through the church means we're still calling people to "COME & SEE the BODY OF CHRIST"— only now the body is MANY MEMBERS and not just one.

“ God has gifted each body member with a tool that is to be used in His kingdom's service (1Pet 4:10). Some of these tools are to be employed in a supporting role in the community of faith; others are manifested on the front lines in communicating and teaching the faith. [Some are] gifted at reaching others on a relational basis, by helping them through times of crisis. [Some are more gifted at verbalizing the gospel] God has placed body members strategically in the world's harvest field. The church's challenge is to transform them from field residents to laborers. We can do this by communicating a more holistic evangelism approach. People need to be challenged to employ the gift of helps to minister to those in need and then network with the verbalizers in the congregation. To reach the world, the church must become a team— one that coordinates its gifts and resources to reach the world. That requires the Holy Spirit's creativity, working through disciplined members, the softness of the love gifts, the correctness of the word gifts, and the determination of the leadership gifts. Working together is the key.” **Bill Hull**, “The Disciplemaking Church”, p. 45-47

Practically Speaking – What Does it Mean for Me to Embrace Discipleship

- 1) It Means Counting the Cost —** Discipleship is Stretching, Challenging, and requires Intentional Effort and Obedience
- 2) It Means Seeking a Spirit Filled/Empowered Life**
- 3) It Means Joining the Church in It's Mission**
- 4) It Means Reaching Back for Those Behind You with the Intention of Helping Them Take the Next Step**

“ Every Christian is in a relay race. Each of us is to take the baton and hand it on to others. None of us is in a solo effort. Somebody invested the gospel in us, and we are to invest it in others.” **John MacArthur**, “The Master's Plan for the Church,” p. 63

“ Every Christian needs to take time to select a few people and to determine to spend time teaching them the basic fundamentals, such as Bible study, prayer, outreach, and various ministry skills. But we must be careful not only to teach the content but also to model these truths in our lives. The example in outreach is vital; it serves as a catalyst. Each of us should covenant together with one, two, or three others to engage in weekly sessions for a fixed period of time.” **Bill Hull**, “Jesus Christ Disciplemaker”, p. 36

“ You may feel that you don't know much. Find someone who knows less than you do and tell him what you know. Find someone who knows more than you do and listen to him. Teach and be taught.” **John MacArthur**, “The Master's Plan for the Church,” p. 63

- 5) It Means Reaching Up for Those in Front of You to Learn From**

Paul has a Timothy and Timothy has a Paul_

— CG ministry adjustment to be aware of

2 CRITICAL INGREDIENTS:

1. Accountability
2. Humility

“ A disciple submits to a leader who teaches him to follow Jesus. This is what rescues discipleship from being a process without results. I have said it so many times— you can't make disciples without accountability, and you can't have accountability without structure. ...the majority of people in small groups are satisfied with the process without regard for progress. When I say that our discipleship is too fast and too programmed, I am speaking of the lack of personal submission in groups, large or small. Without humility there is no submission; without submission I shut others out from speaking into my life. So people can go through programs and Bible studies but keep accountability for personal transformation at arm's length.” **Bill Hull**, “Jesus Christ Disciple-maker”, p. 15

SUMMARY:

“Go and make disciples” is very different than just “Going to Church” or “being a Christian”— these things can be done without me fulfilling the Governing Principle of Matt. 28:18-20. The standard by which we are to measure success is by looking behind us— what are the names of the people who have become disciples as the result of the way we've lived our lives.