

# *A Guide to* **Basic Disciplemaking**

As we discuss the ministry of Christian Disciplemaking let us consider that making disciples is the **means** by which God has provided a way for Christians to have a **sound faith** and **practice** as they live out their Christian Life. It is a **focused time of learning** which is vital to Christian life, usually accomplished in the **early years** just after one's conversion to Christ. **Disciplemaking** was **instituted by Jesus Himself** and was the means that He used to bring His disciples to **Christian maturity**. Further, it was His **mandate** to the church to foster and **promote** the **expansion** of the **Kingdom** which He commissioned the church to carry out until the end of the age (Matt 28:18-20).

**Matthew 28:18-20** - 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "**Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. " NASB

## **What is a Christian disciple?**

A Christian disciple is one who knows and understands the Gospel, has repented of sin, believed on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, and characteristically ***follows after, learns, and practices*** the teaching, disciplines and traditions of Christ. Jesus called His first disciples to "***follow Him.***"

**Matthew 4:18-22** - 18 And walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19 And He said to them, "**Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.**" 20 And they immediately left the nets, and followed Him. 21 And going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. 22 And **they immediately left the boat and their father, and followed Him.** NASB

Those fishermen left their nets and **committed to Him** and His teaching. So it is with everyone who responds to Christ's call to discipleship. **Christians are Christ followers.**

**Luke 5:27-28** - 27 And after that He went out, and noticed a tax-gatherer named Levi, sitting in the tax office, and He said to him, **"Follow Me."** 28 **And he left everything behind, and rose and began to follow Him.** NASB

**Luke 14:25-28** - 25 Now great multitudes were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, 26 **"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. 27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.** NASB

Jesus calls us into a **devoted life of worship and service** unto Him. He will have **no rivals** in our lives that take a **higher place** than our devotion to Him. We are called to **forsake** our **old ways of life** and **commit** to His way of life. We exchange the way of **sin** and **self** for a **new life in Christ**. That **new life** brings not only **salvation** from sin and death and the hope of eternal life, but a **new life of delight, joy**, and a deep sense of direction and purpose. When we follow Christ, we begin to live for what is **truly valuable** and **virtuous**, and we pursue the **highest things** in life, even the **glory of God**. And Christ loves us enough to call us to life's highest ideal, even God's greatest commandment, calling us to **love Him** wholeheartedly. ***"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all you mind. This is the great and foremost commandment."*** (Matthew 22:35-40). A right response to Christ is **motivated** by genuine **commitment** to **love** and **obey Him wholeheartedly**. We cannot serve Christ while cherishing worldly idols **above Him**. He is most glorified when we obey and follow Him as the object of our **love** and **devotion**.

**John 14:21** - 21 **"He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me;** and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him." NASB

**2 Corinthians 5:14-15** - 14 For the **love of Christ controls us**, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, that **they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.** NASB

## **What is a Christian disciplemaker?**

Christian disciples pattern their lives after Christ, they **follow Him** and do what He does. The book of Acts records many examples of those who learned and **followed Christ's** teaching. In short, they went and **discipled the nations** and established the Kingdom of God in much of the known

world at that time in history. And church history is full of this same success right down to our own present generation. In fact, we **Christians today** are the **fruit** of the **labor** of the **church** in **every generation making disciples** since the time of Christ.

Now if you are a Christian, you also are *a disciple, a follower of Christ*. His “**great commission**” to His first twelve followers (Matthew 28:18-20) **applies to you** as well. You have been commissioned to “go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.” As a disciple, a follower of Christ, you too have been commissioned to **make disciples** because **all Christians make disciples**. It is the **nature of discipleship**. And this is how in a spiritual sense the **church reproduces** itself in history, as we make new disciples, who in turn, make disciples.

Christian disciplemakers are **growing Christians** who **help other Christians** follow the **pattern Jesus** set for the **twelve**. Mark Dever says “**discipling is helping others follow Jesus.**” That is a great definition! Christian disciplemakers evangelize and teach the disciplines of Christ to those who commit to listen, believe, and follow. We clearly see the **results** of the first disciples’ **obedience to Christ’s command** in the narrative of the book of Acts, and the results of every Christian generation since then in Church history. And **every new generation faces the same task** and **privilege**, to go and **make disciples** in **our day** and in **our place** and beyond.

Consider what this looked like in Jesus ministry. **Jesus’ divine method of disciplmaking** takes an unregenerate person, **transforms** him by the power of the Spirit through faith in Christ (evangelism), **grounds** him in how to live the Christian Life through the Word, and **releases** him into the world to **continue** the **process** of evangelizing and making disciples of others. And so we see also in **Jesus method** what **disciplmaking** truly **IS**. It is **what Jesus did** with the **twelve**. Those who receive Christ need to

learn **how to live** the **Christian life**. They must be personally instructed in the fundamental principles of Christian living.

- daily meditation on the Word
- daily communion with God through prayer
- regular Christian worship, fellowship, and service in the Church. (2 Peter 1:5-8)

**Effective discipling** produces **growing Christians**, who are able to evangelize and **make disciples** on their **own**. Christian disciples are **discipling disciples**. They are Christians who have come to enough **maturity** to live **healthy Christian lives** that are **fruitful** and **productive**. In short effective discipling produces Christians equipped to live the Christian Life and make disciples of others, just like Jesus and the twelve. They **help others follow Jesus**.

Consider discipling in our role of the priesthood of all believers.

**1 Peter 2:5, 9 - 5** you also, as living stones, **are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.** .. **9** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, **that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him** who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; NASB

## **What is Christian discipleship?**

**Discipleship** is really just living the Christian Life. But the word emphasizes that **part of Christian Life** that includes being **obedient** to **Christ in discipling**. Discipling takes place within *close personal relationships*. Although a teacher or writer may do a certain amount of **“discipling”** through books, Bible study lessons, or audio-recordings, fully effective discipling does **more than communicate information and stimulate application**. It also focuses on personal situations, questions, desires, and needs through personal counseling. It is focused on **everyday situations** and **helping others follow Jesus** in the everyday stuff of the Christian Life. This will be most **effective** when discipling and disciple enjoy a **close, trusting, personal relationship**. Such a relationship will resemble that between Jesus and His disciples.

The disciplemaker's life should be an *example* of the things being taught to the disciple. Discipling will take enough **integrity** that your life as a discipler is **genuinely** reflecting the kind of **godly life** that others can **follow**. You are in a sense saying to them, come follow me as I follow Jesus.

**2 Thessalonians 3:7-9** - 7 For you yourselves know how **you ought to follow our example**, because **we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you**, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we might not be a burden to any of you; 9 not because we do not have the right to this, but **in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, that you might follow our example**. NASB

If we are going to help others follow Jesus, then **we must** also be **following Him**. Thus, the **disciplemaker** is **accountable** to the **disciple** as well. We are all learning to grow together.

**Luke 6:40-41** - 40 "A pupil is not above his teacher; **but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher**". NASB

**Instruction** in the **knowledge** of **God** and His Kingdom is a **fundamental part** of **discipling**. Biblical instruction fosters Christian *maturity*, which when reached, qualifies the disciple to making disciples on his or her own. Thus **discipling** is **focused** on bringing the disciple to Christian **maturity**. This means they have learned **how to live the Christian Life** and walk in the **basic disciplines** of Christian Life. They must be **personally instructed** in the **fundamental principles** of Christian living.

- daily meditation on the Word
- daily communion with God through prayer
- regular Christian worship, fellowship, and service in the Church. (2 Peter 1:5-8)

If a disciple has not learned to **feed themselves** on the **Word of God daily**, and how to **commune** with **God in prayer** and **fellowship regularly** with other godly Christians, they have not learned how to live the Christian Life. They must also realize that these basic disciplines

should have the effect of **transforming us** so that we become more **like Christ** in our **character** and in our **practice**. The Christian Life is a **godly life** of virtue fueled by the **Word, prayer**, and regular **fellowship**.

**2 Peter 1:5-8** - 5 Now for this very reason also, **applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence**, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. 8 **For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** NASB

Jesus left all Christians a *mandate* to make disciples in His **Great Commission** (Matthew 28:18-20). The visible church has been **slow** in heeding Christ's call to **nurture new believers** as they as they **grow** in grace and knowledge of God's Word. Consider that a **healthy church** should be filled with Christians who **actually** do the hard **work** of **nurturing new believers** in the faith so that they can enjoy the **maturity** of a **godly life**, and better yet, put the glory of God on display by the way that they live!

**Acts 14:21-22** - 21 And after they had preached the gospel to that city and had **made many disciples**, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22 **strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith**, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." NASB

May God grant us deep desire to walk after the example Christ set for us! We have been called to high and holy privilege of making disciples! (Matthew 16:24-25)

## **Qualifications for the Disciplemaker**

Are you **spiritually mature** enough to make disciples? Does your life exemplify **effective, productive Christian living** that will instruct and encourage disciples? Does the **Holy Spirit reign** in your life over your **sinful passions** and vices? Is your love and enjoyment of God clearly

evident in the way you live? When you sin, do others see you **humbly confess** and **repent**? Those are good questions for any Christian as they consider their spiritual health. Clear **evidence** of **growing spiritual maturity** is **fundamental** to your **effective discipling**. Therefore as we think about our role as a discipler, helping others follow Jesus, let us briefly consider our own spiritual health, and some qualifications for being and effective discipler.

1. **Spiritual maturity** – If we are going to help others follow Jesus, then **we must** also be **following Him**. The discipler's life should be an *example* of the things being taught to the disciple. Discipling will take enough **integrity** that your life as a discipler is **genuinely** reflecting the kind of **godly life** that others can **follow**. You are in a sense saying to them, come follow me as I follow Jesus. Consider Paul's example to the Thessalonians.

**2 Thessalonians 3:7-9** - 7 For you yourselves know how **you ought to follow our example**, because **we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you**, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we might not be a burden to any of you; 9 not because we do not have the right to this, but **in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, that you might follow our example**. NASB

Now see here the importance of our own **spiritual maturity**. If helping others follow Jesus

means teaching them to **live the Christian Life effectively** and productively, we must ask, is

our Christian Life **effective** and **productive**? Are we loving Christ and also our neighbor, in

the church and outside the church? Does our life reflect the **basic disciplines** feeding

ourselves daily on the Word of God? Are we communing daily with God in prayer? Do we

fellowship regularly with other godly Christians? Is all of this **transforming** our lives and making us more like Jesus? See here a healthy gauge of our own spiritual health.