

Discipleship Series

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*We invite you to submit questions all throughout the series for our panel discussion on 12/15.



Discipleship



Week 1: What is Discipling?

What do you think of when you hear the word “disciple?” What does the word “disciple” bring to mind for you?

I. What is a DISCIPLE?

Aspects of discipleship

- Educational
- Relational
- Missional

What are some general marks of a disciple of God?

- Response to God’s initiating call (Mark 1:16-20)
- A desire to know what God says. (Job 23:12; Jer. 15:16; Deut. 6:5-7; Rom. 10:17; I Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18)
- A break from the world’s standards. (I Cor. 10:13; II Cor. 5:17)
- Self-discipline. (Gal. 5:22-23; Matt. 16:24; Luke 3:11; I Cor. 9:25-27)
- A desire to seek and encourage with other disciples. (Rom. 15:5-6; Acts 2:42; Eph. 3:17-19; Heb. 10:25; I Pet. 1:22; I John 1:2, 7)
- Passion for Evangelism. (I John 3:16-24; I Pet. 2:21; II Cor. 9:6-7; Philip. 1:21; Matt. 10:32; John 14:12)
- Perseverance. (Philip. 3:13-14; I John 1-4; Ps. 37:23-24; Rom. 6:1-14; II Pet. 1:1-10; John 5:37-39)

II. The LARGER CONTEXT for DISCIPLING—the LOCAL CHURCH

There is not a single authoritative definition given in one place in Scripture.

For the most part, we will be talking about relational or one-on-one discipling—you relating to another person or two with the aim to do them good spiritually.

Think of discipling on a much larger scale—what we do together as a church. What we are talking about in this class (i.e., one on one discipling) is one of the many tools God employs in his greenhouse (i.e., the local church) and it should not be considered in isolation to the others.

III. What is DISCIPLING?

Based on the synthesis of biblical truth, one way to define the work of discipling as: *The intentional encouragement of Christians on the basis of deliberate, loving relationships and training in God’s Word.*

First, biblical discipling is *intentional and deliberate.*

Matthew 28:18–20

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

This is not a charge simply to tell the Gospel message, but to make

disciples. That is to be the focus of our evangelism – disciple-making.

Second, biblical discipling is *relational*.

The idea that *discipling is relational* is interwoven through much of the Old and New Testaments.

We see this relational focus through the biblical description of God’s assembled children in the local church. These assemblies are described as “households”, “bodies”, “buildings” – images that picture the interrelation and integrated workings of distinct parts.

Third, biblical discipling is *loving*.

Intentional relational discipling is not cold and utilitarian, rather it is near the very essence of how God has called us to love one another within his church. We are called to deliberately pour out our lives for the spiritual good of others, just as Christ poured out his life for our eternal good.

The Apostle John says it clearly in 1 John 3:16...”This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.”

Why did Jesus lay down his life for us? To glorify God and to do us good spiritually. To teach, model, encourage and love his disciples.

Fourth, biblical discipling involves *training in God’s Word*.

Discipling must be rooted in the *Word of God*. It is God’s Word that brings life, and not the discipler’s sage advice.

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in

righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-18; cf. Isaiah 55:10-11; James 1:21; 2 Peter 1:3-4).

IV. BIBLICAL DISCIPLING IS BEING A PIPELINE

The purpose of a pipeline is to move fluid along in the direction it should go, making sure it gets from the source to the intended destination.

Biblical discipling is very much like being a pipeline. Christians who root themselves in God’s truth are in a position to do good to others. God uses Christians as conduits for his truth.

V. PROCESS, NOT PROGRAM

Why might it be easy to think of discipleship as a program instead of a process? Many programs have been developed to “grow” disciples. But because every person is different and has different struggles and temptations, discipleship cannot be so easily packaged.

At its core, discipling is essentially whatever we do to intentionally help other Christians to grow up in holiness. It’s a process of becoming like Christ; it’s not a program.

CONCLUSION

As we walk away this morning I want to remind you that:

- Discipling is *intentional* and *deliberate*
- Discipling is *relational*
- Discipling is *loving*
- Discipling involves *training in God’s Word*

Discipleship

Week 2: Why Disciple?



Reason #1: Why Disciple? _____

Christ-centered repentance and forgiveness is something to be heard and applied, not just once, but for the _____ of a disciples life.

Disciples are made, whether for the first time or the fiftieth time, through _____.

Those who avoid _____ surrender the fight.

Reason #2: Why Disciple? _____

Scripture presents *our joy* as a legitimate motivator for Christians disciplers.

- Philippians 1:3-5
- Philippians 2:1-2
- Philippians 4:1
- Romans 16:19
- 2 Corinthians 7:4, 13-16
- 1 Thess 2:19-20
- 2 John 1:4

In all these verses, what was Paul and John's basis for rejoicing? God intends to produce joy in you when you are used to _____.

Reason #3: Why Disciple? _____

We learn from God's word that the result of discipling is greater fruit from our lives that leads to God's glory. Let's look at John 15:1-8. Here Jesus teaches his followers saying:

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown in the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. 8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

What is it that Christ describes in the life of the believer that will bring glory to the Father? _____. We will discuss what that fruit *is* in a moment.

And what will that fruitfulness demonstrate to a watching world?

So then, what is this fruit that Jesus is speaking about? In John 15:9-17, we see examples of the kind of fruit that Jesus has in mind, the fruit that should naturally flow from our being _____ and how that fruit brings great glory to the Father.

John 15: 9-17.

9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 17 This is my command: Love each other.

We are told that we should love each other as Christ has loved us. So, it seems obvious that at least part of the fruit that is implied here is _____

Jesus _____

With regard to doing good for humanity, what was the primary object of Jesus laying down his life for us? To bring us to Father.

- So that the we _____
- So that we _____
- So that our _____
- So that our _____

So it should be with us! We should lay down our lives for others with the deliberate intent of making ourselves a means that God may use to do these good things in the lives of others.

Jesus Made Known to Us All That He had Learned From His Father

Second, we read that another mark of Christ's love for His disciples is that he made known to them what he learned from the Father. He opened up _____ of God to them.

Discipleship

Week 3: Overcoming Excuses & Barriers



Introduction

What are some reasons that a person might give for not engaging in discipling relationships?

Excuse #1: I don't want to be in a position of "authority."

- Our culture struggles with the idea of authority being good.
- Jesus' teaching on authority and servanthood.
 - John 13:14 – washing disciples feet
 - Matt. 20:25-28 – not served, but to serve

Excuse #2: Intentional discipling relationships turn friends into projects.

- John 15 and Jesus' definition of "friendship" and "love"
- Ephesians 5:1-2 – Christ's intentional sacrifice as model of love

Excuse #3: I just don't feel like it and I don't have the time.

- We love others because God first loved us.

- To challenge them to live their life with Christ at the center is the most loving thing you can ever do for them.

- Is the problem really time, or prioritization of time?

- Static expectation for our relationships—we don't have the time to do *all* the things that might help, so we don't bother doing *anything* to help.

- Using the teaching ministry of Bethany as a time multiplier
 - Attend Sunday School together and discuss

 - Meet occasionally to discuss the Sunday sermon

Excuse #4: I don't have anything I can "teach."

- The Gospel is great discipling content (Titus 3: 1-8)

- You *always* have something you can teach

Excuse #5: I'm just not gifted to disciple others.

- We all have different gifts we can pass on.

- You don't have to do this on your own. Get them to join a church!

Excuse #6: I'm not a people person.

- We are all good disciples of something.

- Christ sacrifice calls us to a *word* ministry.

Overcoming Fears of Discipling

- Discipling is serious...some fear is good.
 - (Matt. 18:6, 2 Peter 2:1)

Dealing with General Fears

- God has a plan to work through his people (1 Cor. 16: 10-11, 1 Cor. 1:25-27, 2 Tim. 1:7, 1 Tim. 4:12)

- Our humanity should not surprise them

Conclusion

- Despite our fears, discipling is rewarding!

- God chooses us to do this good work!
- Ultimately this all accomplished through the power of God's Word!

Things to Do This Week / Three Practical Steps:

- Write out your own barriers and excuses and submit them to the light of Scripture.
- Think through your schedule and think about how you can prioritize discipling more in your life.
- Take some teaching from today (the core seminar, the morning sermon or the evening sermon) and pass it on to someone this week.

Discipleship

Week 4: Discipleship & the Word



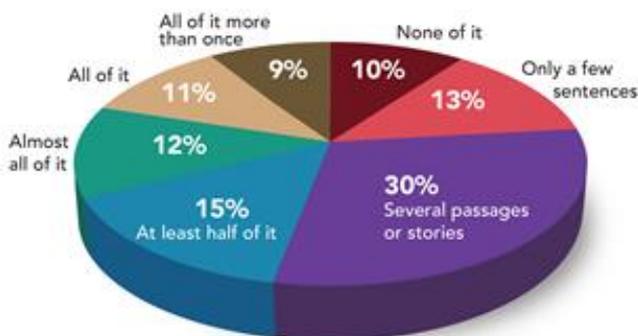
Why are we talking about a topic like Bible study during a course on discipleship? Isn't discipleship supposed to be about relationships?

I. The Importance of the Word of God

- The Word of God is central to our discipleship efforts. All that we know about Jesus Christ, we know from the Word.
- We must truly value the Word of God.

Among Americans:

How much of the Bible have you personally read?



LifeWay

LifeWayResearch.com

- Only 11% of American read the Bible daily
- 18% of “born-again Christians” read the Bible every day.
- 23% of “born-again Christians” say they never read the Word of God.

- In many churches, much is said about the importance of the Bible with very little focus on the Bible. Sermons center on self-help topics and the latest popular books and ideas.

- **What does the Bible say about its importance in our lives?**
 - Deuteronomy 6:6-9:

 - Psalm 119:9-16:

 - Psalm 119:28:

 - Matthew 4:4

 - Matthew 7:24-27

 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17

 - Hebrews 4:12

II. Bible Study – Getting Started

- Practically speaking, it is all too easy for us to find other things to do than read the Bible.
 - *Don't be surprised if that's true of the people you disciple as well!*

1) Start with a commitment to read the Bible daily.

- Schedules in many Bibles
- Discipleship Journal Bible Reading Plan
- The Read Scripture Plan – The Bible Project
thebibleproject.com

2) Attend the Sunday evening Bible Study at Bethany Bible Church and bring the person you are discipling with you.

- This may be the easiest way to get started with your Bible study.
- Importance of the exegetical preaching and teaching of the Word taking place at Bethany Bible Church.
- Bringing someone with you will be a great opportunity to discuss the study together, ask/answer questions, and grow.

3) Spend time together going through the Bible.

- One-to-One Bible Reading
- Discovery Bible Study

4) Set up an accountability structure

- Challenge those you are meeting with and ask them if they're regularly reading the Word.
- Tell them what you've been reading and what you've learned.
- Ask them what they've been reading and what they've learned.

III. Bible Study Method – One to One Reading

“Imagine if all Christians, as a normal part of their discipleship, were caught up in a web of regular Bible reading – not only digging into the Word privately, but reading it with their children before bed, with their spouse over breakfast, with a non-Christian colleague at work once a week over lunch, with a new Christian for follow-up once a fortnight for mutual encouragement, and with a mature Christian friend once a month for mutual encouragement.

It would be a chaotic web of personal relationships, prayer and Bible reading – more of a movement than a program – but at another level it would be profoundly simple and within reach of all.” (T Payne and C Marshall, *The Trellis and the Vine*, Matthias Media, Sydney, 2009, p. 57)

1) Praying and Reading

- Pray together and read the text out loud

2) Talking Together

- What does the passage mean, what is it teaching?
- Use the COMA method to better understand the passage.

3) Application

- Spend some time discussing how what you have read and discussed in the text might apply to ***your life***.

4) Prayer

- Pray again based on the passage you’ve read. Allow your thanksgivings and prayer requests to spring from what you’ve read and how it applies to your lives.

CONCLUSION

- 1) The Word of God is critically important to our spiritual growth.
- 2) Get started with the study of the Bible now.
- 3) Find a Bible study method that works for your discipleship situation.

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Week 5: Discipleship & the Local Church



Introduction:

What do we mean when we suggest that discipling can best take place in the context of the local church?

I. Christ's Costly inauguration of the Church (Ephesians 2)

II. Christ's Clear Intentions for the Church (Ephesians 4)

Ten Reasons to disciple in the context of the local church...

- 1. Because the church is called by God to be pure.**
- 2. Because you do not have every spiritual gift.**
- 3. Because a church body provides better accountability.**
- 4. Because you have a limited amount of time.**
- 5. Because God is more glorified when the body grows toward him together.**
- 6. Because building up the church is what you were gifted to do.**

- 7. Because discipling is a primary way to show love for Christ and for his church.**

- 8. Because church-based discipling is assumed in Scripture.**

- 9. Because God is greatly glorified in church-based discipling.**

- 10. Because the church is most healthy when it has a whole “culture of discipling.”**

Summary:

- Other discipling venues may not be wrong, but discipling within the local church is clearly optimal.**

- Your love for the church, and the individuals of whom it is composed, should make it your first focus for discipling.**

- The church was established, in part, to foster discipling relationships and it’s there, in the local church, that you should get started.**

Discipleship

Week 6: Practical Steps to Discipleship



“The gospel came to you because it was heading to someone else. God never intended for your salvation to be an end, but a beginning. God saved you to be a conduit through whom His glorious, life-changing gospel would flow to others.” (Introduction, xix)

We begin with the question, _____?

We can only disciple _____. As burdened as we may, and should be, for our unsaved neighbors, co-workers, and family members those endeavors are evangelism, not discipleship

At its very core_____. Do we begin to see why this does not just refer to a “new Christian”? This should be all of our desires and lifelong pursuits!

Every follower of Jesus is a disciple, and Every follower of Jesus needs to be discipled.

How many people should we try to disciple? Can we have too many?

I will begin with, yes you can have too many people you are trying to disciple.

Question: Why would I make this claim? _____

These discipling relationships are at their core, _____.
We do not luck ourselves into discipleship. Therefore, discipling
relationships _____

Three discipleship relationships

Paul- _____

Barnabas- _____

Timothy- _____

How often should I be discipling?

Question: Looking at Jesus' model, how often did Jesus disciple?

If discipleship is a life-long pursuit, the word I would emphasize is:

“There is simply no substitute for getting with people, and it is ridiculous to imagine that anything less, short of a miracle, can develop strong Christian leadership. After all, if Jesus, the Son of God found it necessary to stay constantly with His few disciples for three years, and even one of them was lost, how can a church expect to do this job on an assembly line basis a few days out of the year?” (Master Plan of Discipleship, pg. 48)

Where do we disciple?

Discipleship can happen _____

Discipleship Suggestion: Connect with a few people this week and commit to meeting with the intention _____, encouraging one another, and allowing to gospel to reveal where _____ to Jesus' examples.

Resources & Format

Discipleship can take many forms, but it is never _____

While watching movies with a group of friends is exciting and enjoyable and you may grow closer as friends, unless _____ are happening it is not discipleship.

Discipleship

Week 7: Hazards and Joys of Discipling



I. Seven Dangers of Discipling

1) Self-importance

1 Corinthians 15:9–10

⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

2) Self-reliance

3) Don't be program-minded

4) Sense of failure

5) Inappropriate Intimacy (in cross-gender discipling)

6) Dependency on the discipler

7) Trusting you too easily – taking your word for truth without thinking

III. Conclusion

- Discipling is the work of the church, not just leaders.

- Discipling can be a way to spread blessing beyond Bethany Bible Church.

- Greater emphasis on discipling starts with you!

- Continue to grow in your own discipleship of Christ.

- Seek out people and opportunities to encourage others.

Discipleship
Week 8: Panel Discussion



