

Getting Started (Or Restarted) With Disciple Making



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Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

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Introduction

A. “Making disciples is not my job.” “Someone else is better suited to be a disciple maker.” “I don’t know how to help others be disciples of Christ.” “I want to help people be disciples of Christ, but I don’t know what I should do or where I should begin.”

B. Maybe you have made one of these statements – or a similar one. One thing all these statements have in common is that they will prevent you from being as effective as you can be in the work of disciple making.

C. What we all need to get started (or restarted) with disciple making is three-fold. First, we all need the proper motivation so that disciple making does not get overlooked in our daily lives. Second, we all need a plan so we know things we can do to help others be disciples of Jesus. Third, we need to be intentional in executing the plan so we actually accomplish the work.

D. Purpose: To learn some basic information that will help you develop the right motivation, formulate a plan, and become intentional about the work of disciple making.

1. God Wants All Disciples To Be Disciple Makers

A. God wants you to be a growing disciple

1. To be an effective disciple maker, you must commit to growing discipleship yourself. A disciple is someone who learns from and imitates the Master, Jesus Christ.

2. Being a growing disciple is essential for several reasons. First, whenever you became a disciple, you were like a newborn baby in Christ and expected to grow (1 Peter 2:2). Second, if you are going to set the right example of what a disciple should be, you must grow. Third, if you are going to be equipped to teach others, you must know it for yourself.

B. Understanding the “Great Commission”

1. Whenever we talk about the work of making disciples, we naturally talk about the “Great Commission” Jesus gave to His apostles (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16).

2. Consider the true goal of the “Great Commission.” The goal is *not* to baptize people, to feel better about ourselves, to win religious arguments, to build big churches, etc. Instead, the goal is to make disciples. So, all your efforts must be focused on how you can most effectively help people be disciples of Jesus!

3. Notice the four steps Jesus identified in making disciples. First, you must go to those who need help becoming Jesus’s disciples. Second, you must preach the gospel to those who are not disciples. Third, you must help people be baptized so they be saved and begin to live as Jesus’s disciples. Fourth, you must continue teaching those who are Jesus’s disciples.

C. God expects you to be busy doing what you can in this important work

1. God expects disciples to mature to a point they can help others be disciples (Hebrews 5:12-14). “Ordinary” Christians must be ready to give a defense for their hope (1 Peter 3:15). So, every Christian has this responsibility – including you!

3. Ephesians 4:11-16 makes it clear that you are responsible for doing what you can as a member of Christ’s body to serve Christ and build up the body. You must allow others to help you learn to serve God effectively (vv. 11-12), including to help others be disciples.

D. View yourself as a disciple maker

1. There is one change you can make right now to dramatically impact how well you accomplish the work of disciple making. This is to identify yourself as a disciple maker. Write this truth on your heart and engrain it into every fiber of your being!

2. When you do this, everything you do will be viewed from a disciple making perspective.

- You will always consider the impact your example has on other people serving Christ. You will view every situation as a possible opportunity to make disciples. You will study the Bible with the intention of growing as a disciple and being better equipped as a disciple maker. You will make intentional efforts to make disciples.

2. Debunking Some Common Myths About Disciple Making

A. “Nobody’s interested anymore”

1. That is what many will claim and how many people and churches explain the lack of disciples being made.

2. Although many are not interested, God is still giving people the opportunity to repent (2 Peter 3:9). These may be people you know. But, even if nobody was interested, it would not change your responsibility of sharing the gospel with them!

B. “I can’t”

1. This is what many say when they are intimidated by the work of making disciples so as to excuse themselves from the work and feel better about it.

2. While some can do more than others, every disciple *can* do something to make disciples (Philippians 4:13)! For, God has not given a law that is impossible for you to obey.

C. “Disciple making is not my job”

1. Many do not recognize or accept disciple making as their work. Instead, they believe this is a work reserved for evangelists and elders.

2. We have already seen passages that demonstrate this is a work God has given to every Christian, not just to a select few (i.e. Hebrews 5:12-14; 1 Peter 3:15; Ephesians 4:11-16)!

D. “Someone else will do it”

1. Some pass up their opportunities to make disciples by reasoning that someone else will do the work at another time.

2. Rather than assuming someone else will do the work, you must take advantage of your opportunities and do the best you can to help others follow Christ (Romans 10:13-18)!

E. “Inviting is disciple making”

1. Many disciples have been trained that just inviting people to an assembly of the church accomplishes the work of making disciples.

2. While this is one way to try and identify those who are interested in spiritual things, it is not the only tool that can be used. Some you invite to come may have no idea why they should come. Instead,

Jesus taught that we should *go* and *preach*, not just invite people to come (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16)!

F. “Disciple making is an event”

1. To many disciples, disciple making is a one-time effort (i.e. a mass mailing, a gospel meeting, a door-to-door campaign, a single conversation, etc.). Then, if others do not respond to that invitation, it is the fault of the other people.

2. Instead, you must view disciple making as a life-long process of planting and watering the seed of God’s word in the hearts of others (1 Corinthians 3:6).

G. “You have to barbeque first”

1. Some disciples think they must have an established social relationship in place before they can do any kind of effective disciple making work. So, while they may make some efforts with people they know, they neglect opportunities with people they do not know.

2. While you should try to make disciples of those you have established relationships with, these are not the only opportunities you should utilize. For example, when Paul went on his preaching journeys, he simply met and taught people wherever they were (Acts 17:17)!

H. “Disciple making is just about reaching the lost”

1. While much of your focus in disciple making may be on trying to reach the lost, this must not be your only focus.

2. Jesus’s “Great Commission” did not just focus on helping those who are not disciples become disciples. Rather, Matthew 28:19-20 also instructs disciples to continue teaching disciples to live as disciples!

3. How To Find Prospects

A. Always be prospecting

1. Finding people to help follow Jesus is not an exact science. So, you need to embrace the reality that prospects are everywhere people live and go.

2. You should always have a “going” mindset that is looking for God to open doors of opportunities (Colossians 4:3-4), never taking a break from prospecting!

B. People you know

1. You likely have many prospects among people you know (i.e. friends, family members, neighbors, co-workers, classmates, parents of your children's friends, people you see and interact with regularly, social media contacts, etc.).

2. Make a list of prospects, with a mixture of non-Christians, erring/weak Christians, and faithful Christians to get yourself started. Challenge yourself to come up with 40+ prospects. Then, as you work with these, try to expand your list even further.

C. Intentional prospecting efforts

1. Don't decide to just work with people you already know. Instead, you would also do well to make intentional efforts to find additional prospects.

2. While you can and should do this as you go about your daily activities, make intentional efforts designed to find prospects (i.e. door-to-door, social media, etc.).

D. People who know people you know

1. Your social network is actually far larger than you probably imagine at first. For, all the people you know have an entire network of people they know!

2. Always be looking for opportunities to tap into the social networks of others with the gospel of Christ! You may simply ask if they know anyone who would be interested in studying the Bible.

4. Seven Things You Can Do Right Now To Make Disciples

A. Set an example of godly living

1. Your daily life should preach a consistent message of discipleship to those who see and interact with you (Matthew 5:14-16).

2. Your positive example of godly living can help people follow Jesus and your hypocritical example can turn people away from Jesus (Romans 2:24). Determine you will use your example for good to help others follow Jesus – and then supplement your example with the necessary teaching.

B. Build stronger relationships

1. Established relationships can tap into the trust you have built with another (i.e. to help them accept an invitation to study the Bible with you). Think about examples of those who brought their households to Jesus (Acts 10-11; Acts 16).

2. You would do well to be intentional about building stronger relationships with others so you can share your life with them, let your light shine, and be in positions to speak truth into their lives and influence them in God's direction.

C. Engage in spiritual conversations

1. Your various conversations with people throughout a day can present opportunities to talk about spiritual things and identify people who may be willing to consider what the Bible teaches.

2. Jesus demonstrated how to engage in a spiritual conversation in John 4. In this Scripture, Jesus was bold enough to begin a conversation – and then took the conversation from the casual, to the meaningful, to the spiritual.

D. Invite to assembly

1. Some people are at a place in their lives where this invitation will be quite effective. Perhaps they are looking for a church family to be part of. Perhaps there is a subject that interests them in an upcoming assembly. But, you will never know if you do not ask.

2. Make sure you recognize, though, that getting people to assemble with the church is not the goal. The goal is to make disciples. So, you will still likely need to arrange Bible studies with them.

E. Give Bible study material

1. There are many people interested in studying the Bible on their own. And, there are many tools available to help people study God's word. You would do well to know where you can find these useful tools so you can share helpful material with others.

2. Perhaps you can give material about a particular subject that has come up in conversation. Perhaps you can invite someone to study through a Bible study series with you. Then, as you distribute these various studies, try to follow up by asking questions, offering additional study material, and looking for an opportunity to have a Bible study together. To get started distributing Bible study material, just ask!

F. Invite to a Bible study

1. I cannot overemphasize the importance of having Bible studies with others! This environment really allows you to learn where someone is in his/her spiritual journey and best know how to help this one follow Jesus. You can then lead this person on a path that will be most helpful in becoming and/or growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ!

2. Studying God's word together in this way is the single best and time-tested way of helping people follow Jesus! To find those who are willing to study in this way, all you have to do is ask! Although not all your prospects will be ready to take this step (and some may never be ready), some may be willing. But, you will never know if you do not ask!

G. Pray

1. All your disciple making efforts should be covered with prayer (Colossians 4:2-6)!

2. Pray for opportunities. Pray for wisdom. Pray to find good soil as you plant and water. Pray for your own efforts. Pray for others. Pray about everything and everyone involved – and trust in God!

Conclusion

A. As a disciple of Jesus, you must do whatever you can to help others follow Jesus! In fact, you must make this a primary focus in your life.

B. Take your place in the 2 Timothy 2:2 model. Someone taught you. Now, you must teach others – so they can then teach others, who will teach others, etc. Just imagine the good for God's kingdom you can accomplish by fulfilling your role in this way! And, just imagine the victory for Satan if you do not!

Study Questions

What three things are needed to get started (or restarted) with disciple-making?

1. God Wants All Disciples To Be Disciple-Makers

Why is it important to be a growing disciple?

What does Jesus command in the “Great Commission”?

What does God expect of you in making disciples?

Why is it important to view yourself as a disciple-maker?

2. Debunking Some Common Myths About Disciple-Making

Give a brief response to the following myths.

- A. “Nobody’s interested anymore” –
- B. “I can’t” –
- C. “Disciple-making is not my job” –
- D. “Someone else will do it” –
- E. “Inviting is disciple-making” –
- F. “Disciple-making is an event” –
- G. “You have to barbeque first” –
- H. “Disciple-making is just about reaching the lost” –

3. How To Find Prospects

Why is it important to always be prospecting?

What people do you know?

What are some ways you make intentional prospecting efforts?

How should you consider the people who know the people who know you?

4. What To Do With Your Prospects

Why is it important to set an example of godly living? How does this impact disciple-making?

How can you build stronger relationships? How does this impact disciple-making?

How can you engage people in spiritual conversations? What opportunities can these open?

Why should you invite people to an assembly of the church? What opportunities can this open?

How can you give people Bible study material? How does this impact disciple-making?

What can you do to engage people in Bible study? Why should Bible study be so important?

Why should you pray about your disciple-making? What should you pray about?

