

**As
You
Are
Going**

THE WAY OF
THE DISCIPLE

Karl Rigsby

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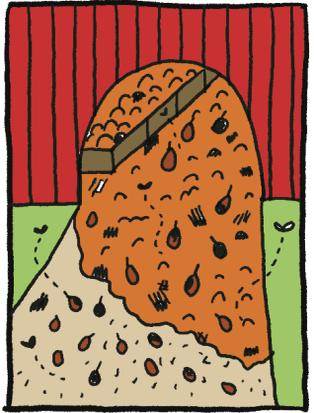
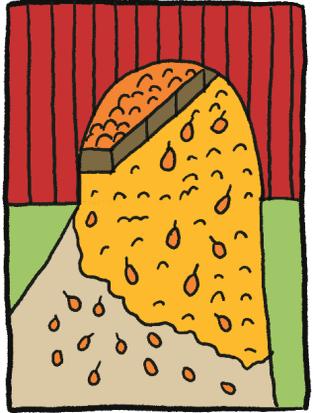
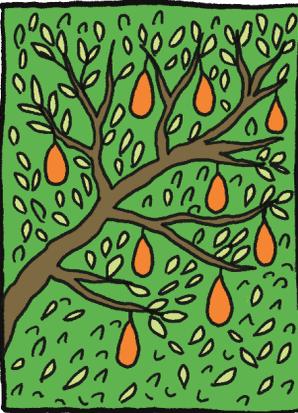
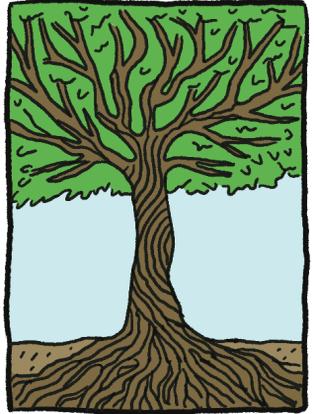
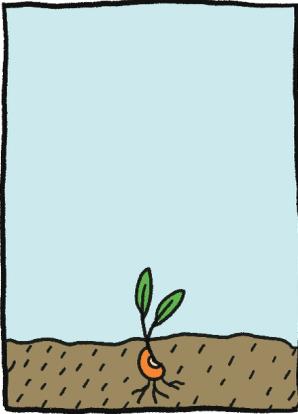
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Introduction

A man planted a tree. He took good care of it, watered it, and fertilized it. And the tree began to grow. After a couple of years, it began to bear delicious fruits. This tree produced fruits all year round that fed and provided everything his family needed. It was a marvelous sight as the tree continued to have more and more fruits.

Because the tree bore so much fruit, the man decided to build a barn to store all his harvest. As the tree kept growing and producing fruits, the barn the man built became too small. So, he decided to build a bigger barn.

Ten years have passed, and the man noticed that the tree is not the same. The leaves started to turn yellow. And the tree is not bearing fruit as it used to. The next year, it did not produce even a single fruit. The man began to panic. Thankfully, he remembered that he had a barn full of fruits. His family would survive even if the tree did not bear fruit. But when he went to his barn to look at the fruits, he was devastated to discover that the fruits he stored were all rotten.

A Divine Green Thumb

The very first form of life God created on Earth was plants and vegetation and within them he places a single all consuming drive: That they bear fruit, with seeds, and that those seeds would one day bear fruit with more seeds” (Genesis 1:11-12).

So too when he created the fish of the sea and birds of the air does he blessed them saying “Be fruitful and increase in number” (Gen 1:22). The very inception of life as we know it begins with an encoded command to multiply.

Oftentimes we can obfuscate the purpose of life, in the case of the barn builder, he viewed that the purpose of fruit was for food! When the old wise man tells him that the purpose is to make another tree, he calls back to the earliest history of life on earth, that the fruit of a tree is answering the very building blocks of God’s vision of the earth. A planet of growth, fruitful and abundant.

When God created man the very first recorded words spoken from God to humans are these, “Be fruitful and increase in number” (Genesis 1:28). Mankind is no exception to God’s vision of a world filled with life. From our very inception we are called to multiply and steward over this multiplying world.

What is Discipleship?

At the heart of discipleship is following Jesus. Discipleship requires that we become more and more Christlike, which can only be done by following Him.

That doesn't mean it will be easy. Jesus told His disciples, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24).

Discipleship is about knowing that more than anything you want to be like Christ, even when that means allowing your old self to die, so that you may take up your cross to follow Him.



Denying Ourselves

(Philippians 2:6-7) “ ... as He already existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God (something to be grasped), but emptied Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant.”

Taking Up Our Cross

(Philippians 2:8) “And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death on a cross.”

Following Jesus

Following Him requires that we step aside, keep away from any concerns we might have, and commit to the kind of obedience that Jesus models. And that obedience has no option for being less than complete.

Philippians 2:5-11 gives us one of the greatest Christological statements in Scripture. Paul described Jesus' incarnation and return to glory as the model for what it must look like to "deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him."

In this passage, the word "Himself" is a reflexive pronoun, which means that Jesus - Himself did the action the verb described. God the Father did not do this "to Jesus" and did not do this "for Jesus." He voluntarily chose to obey His Father. And if we are serious about discipleship, we must willfully decide to follow as well. We cannot afford to wait for someone to do the work of Jesus "for us" or "to us."

Also, Paul first wrote the phrase "... even on a cross" (v.8) to the church in Philippi, a colony of Rome. Its citizens were Roman citizens. Typically, Romans did not crucify other Romans. Crucifixion is a horrific punishment reserved for people like the Jews. Is it possible that with this phrase "...even on the cross," Paul is reminding the Philippians and ultimately us that Jesus has already done what He asks us to do ... and then some?

Matthew 16:24 and Philippians 2:5-11 holistically give us three essential responses on how to be a follower of Jesus.

First Response

To reject the old life controlled by selfishness that convinces us that the world exists for comfort and satisfaction.

The awareness of Jesus' willingness "to empty Himself of equality with God" so that He could come and live among us reminds every would be disciple that Jesus gave up far more than we could ever give up. His willingness to go to the cross is the

ultimate example of denying oneself.

Jesus' journey to the cross was envisioned and sustained as "He humbled Himself" as a servant obedient to the will of His Father. This clarity of purpose allowed Him not to permit anything to detract Him from the Father's purpose for Him.

Along with His command to those who would follow Him, Jesus' model points to a kind of self-awareness without which we can never fruitfully walk the road of discipleship. Until we discover who we are, we can never understand what we must do in order "to deny ourselves." Placing these two passages alongside each other can help us become more self-aware as we compare God's call in the life of Jesus to His call in our lives.

Second Response

Followers of Jesus take up their crosses in faith.

"I am crucified with Christ. I NO LONGER LIVE."

Faith, of course, is the common denominator that unites all followers of Jesus with one another and Him. Paul's descriptive idea about faith in 2 Timothy 1:12b can be helpful here. "For this reason, I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that He is able to protect what I have entrusted to Him until that day." Notice the progressive tension between "know," a word that suggests cognitive knowledge, "believe," a term that indicates at least one step beyond what we can know, and "convinced," a word that suggests a kind of confidence that enables one to stand firm even during a challenge.

Paul wrote this passage so that the young preacher: Timothy, would understand why Paul “is not ashamed” to suffer the things happening in his life. After all, God can “protect what we have entrusted to Him until that day.”

Our Good Shepherd knows us and leads us in ways that are powerful, protective, and ultimately, eternal. The passage’s common definition of “protect” is “to keep.” Interestingly, its use in Scripture often means “to keep something because of its value.” Because we are in the hands of the Good Shepherd, we can be confident that God Himself sees us as having great value as we commit ourselves and our lives totally to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and maker of disciples.

Third Response

As followers of Jesus, we are willing to go wherever and whenever He leads.

Denying ourselves and taking up our crosses has freed us to be unfettered followers of King Jesus. Jesus understands that there is an inseparable relationship between love and obedience. In the very same part of John (14-16) where He promises to send a Helper, Jesus

also says, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

Jesus left His disciples with a simple, but all-encompassing command: love. Students of Scripture have known that “to love our neighbors” was a command from God as far back as Leviticus 19:18. We also know that Jesus also summarized the entire law into two: by loving God and loving neighbor (Luke 10:25-29). But Jesus adds a new dimension to this idea when He tells the disciples in the upper room the night before His crucifixion that He called us “To love one another, even as I have loved you” (John 13:34).

This verse takes us back to the idea that to be a disciple is to be Christlike. Making disciples means we simply reflect Christ by living a life of total commitment, faith, and love. Making disciples is far more demanding than showing up in church “barn” once a week, where the potential for “rotting” is great. Instead, it demands of us a kind of commitment that calls us “to love others as Jesus loved us” no matter where we are or who we encounter. No exceptions! In the gospels, the people who followed Jesus were called disciples. A disciple would mean something like a student, an apprentice, a learner, and a follower in the context of Jesus’ story.

An illustration of a hand holding a sign. The hand is rendered in shades of red and pink, with blue outlines for the fingers. The sign is oval-shaped with a white center and a dark blue border. The text on the sign is written in a red, cursive font. The background is a solid, bright yellow-orange color.

to be a
disciple
is to be
Christlike

1 Too Busy

The first says “I am too busy.”

Many people today in the modern world are constantly bombarded by an ever-present list of ‘things to-do.’ We have a job to work at, classes to attend, groceries to buy, errands to run and a family to care for, just to list a few of

the seemingly endless list of ‘to-dos.’

So we say to ourselves “I just don’t have the time for disciple making,” maybe once I finally get this list of ‘things to do’ done I will be able to start working on it.

The great news is a simple shift in perspective can show you that in fact you have been perfectly set up by your to-do list to make disciples! Each one of those ‘things to do’ is an opportunity to begin planting Christlike seeds.

The Great Commission doesn’t call you to stop what you are doing and go make disciples, instead it tells you to make whatever you are doing about making disciples. Chapter one is dedicated to addressing not only the call of the Great Commission but also how that is reinforced by the Great Commandment.

M buy groceries

T clean kitchen

W bible study

T rob bank

F call mom

S take out trash

S church



2 I Don't Know How

The second roadblock says “I don’t know how.” It is easy to become overwhelmed by fears thinking to ourselves, “I am not a good enough Christian to disciple others, I don’t know how to relate my faith to those around me, I don’t have the skills to disciple others, and I don’t know where to even start.”

The focus of these fears always revolves around one thing: the limitations that come from being human, but there is good news!

You are not the one who reaches into the hearts of the lost, you carry within you a God with none of your limitations, all you have to do is follow His lead and He will take care of the rest. Greater detail about how to follow the lead of God in Chapter two.

3 I Don't Have a Calling

The third roadblock is that “I do not have a calling.” This roadblock calls into question what a “calling” means for Christians. Oftentimes it is used to mean what gifts or talents you have in relation to the church or your spiritual life, but the Great Commission makes it clear that if you follow Christ you are commanded to go forth and make disciples.

This means that your calling is simply how you go about planting your seeds! In every hobby, job, and pastime exists humans who are uniquely able to be reached by you, that couldn't be reached by others who don't share those same interests or talents.

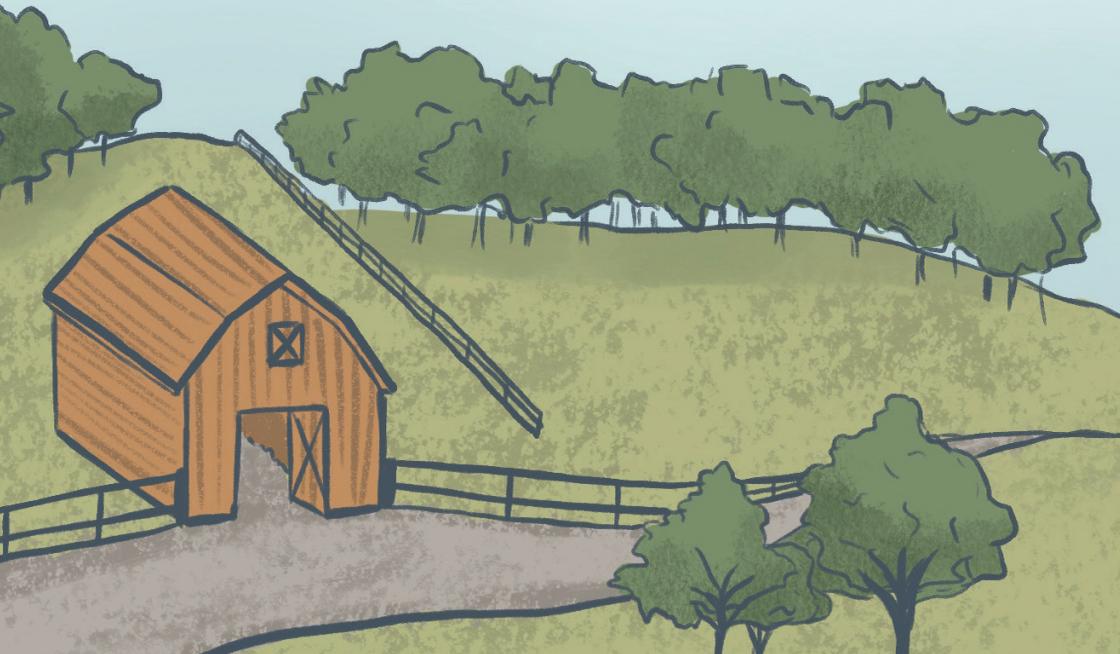
Rather than discipleship being a job that you go out and do, it is instead the intention with which you do your current job. Discipleship is not simply a church program that you attend once a week, it is instead a lifestyle that you use to paint the whole portrait of your life, but how do you go about shifting to discipleship as a lifestyle?

Chapter three is dedicated to answering and breaking down questions about where lifestyle and discipleship intersect.

Once these roadblocks have been addressed, many find themselves saying “Ok I am on board with this whole discipleship as a lifestyle attitude, but what does the actual discipleship look like?” It is simple, can they do what you do? Can they pray, study Scripture, fast and go into 7-11 the way that you do?

The good news for us is that we have the perfect example of what discipleship should look like from Jesus Himself!

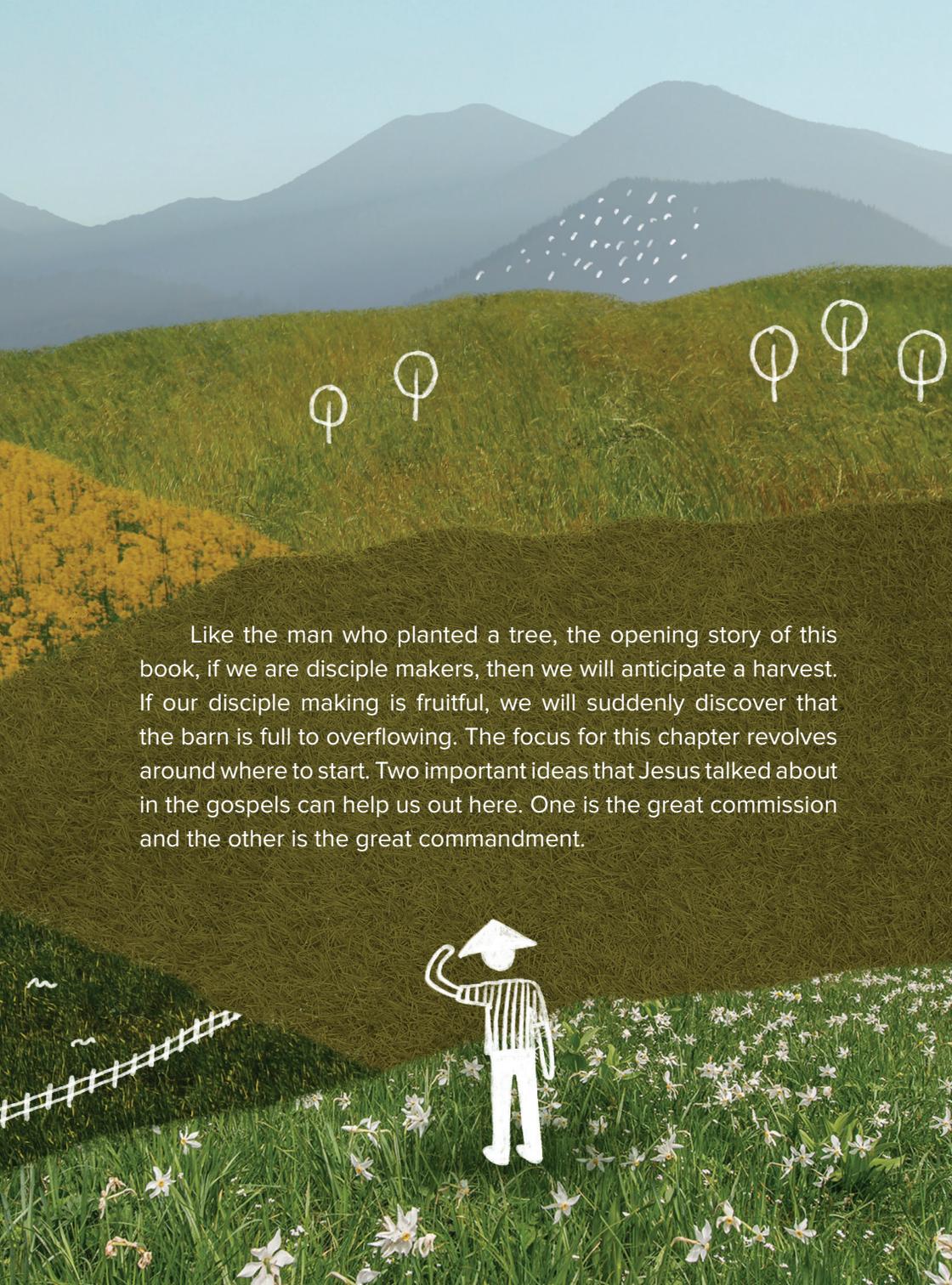
One of the only parables that Jesus explains point by point to His disciples is the parable of the sower. He breaks down how discipleship should and should not look. In Chapter four we dive into the messy business of what organic discipleship really looks like,





CHAPTER 1

Time for Harvest



Like the man who planted a tree, the opening story of this book, if we are disciple makers, then we will anticipate a harvest. If our disciple making is fruitful, we will suddenly discover that the barn is full to overflowing. The focus for this chapter revolves around where to start. Two important ideas that Jesus talked about in the gospels can help us out here. One is the great commission and the other is the great commandment.

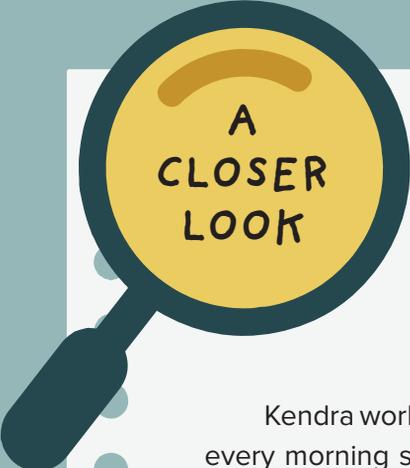
The Great Commission



Jesus spent what seems to be just over three years traveling about the towns and villages of Judea, calling people to follow Him. In particular He called twelve men who are called apostles. The word apostle has as its primary meaning “one sent out.” While these men will play a vital role in the life of the early church, we should not forget that the very first Christian servants Jesus called could be described by a word that means “one sent out.”

At first at least they do not spend much time “going out” instead they are first called to follow Him. It might help if we imagine for a moment a house in Palestine in the first century. Jesus is inside the house and there are those who are inside with Him, fully committed to following Him. Some are on the outside of the house, but looking in the windows, wondering what this itinerant teacher is all about. Others are standing on the distant hill side, disturbed that there are people in the house and that there are people outside looking in. Jesus certainly wasn’t one to stay inside the house so we see Him out and about on a daily basis.

The opening phrase of Matthew 9:35-38 could appropriately be translated “Jesus customarily was going through all the cities and villages ... ” The apostles aren’t sent out until Jesus’ ministry is concluded on earth, with His final departing statement being the Great Commission. “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore 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; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20). It is with this instruction and the direct example of the life and ministry of Jesus that they are now equipped to fulfill their name and be “sent out.”



A CLOSER LOOK

*How do we
apply this?*

Kendra works for a law firm downtown, every morning she stops to grab a coffee and lemon bar before arriving at work, with a Great Commission attitude she can change just a few key things.

Kendra gets to know the names of everyone on shift in the mornings and even wakes a little earlier to go inside to order, each day making a conscious effort to learn something more about their barista.

Now she is not going for a morning pick me up, instead the coffee and lemon bar are her excuse to get to know and show kindness to the baristas.

Baptize

We are then told to take those disciples and baptize them. In Romans 6:3-4 Paul writes this about baptism, “Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

Once you have become a disciple you are no longer the person you used to be. Instead, the old you has died, and you have been raised to ‘new life.’ Baptism is a public testimony that a person has become a part of the people of God, but beyond that it is a commitment to being a follower of Jesus, and so too are ‘sent out.’



A
CLOSER
LOOK



How do we
apply this?

Kendra has gotten to know the barista Teresa and invited her to several events (from barbeques to birthdays) before eventually connecting her to her Christian community. Overtime Teresa decides she wants to be baptized.

Grow

Next is to teach them to grow with God. Sometimes we interpret “observe all I have commanded” as “then teach them to follow all the rules.”

When instead the goal is to teach them to have a relationship with Jesus for themselves. It would be easy to make disciples if everyone you disciplined was exactly like you, but if they were, think of all the people you would never be able to reach.

There will always be languages you don't know, customs you don't understand, hobbies you don't have, and foods you just can't eat. If each disciple was taught to be just like you then they could never reach those who you are unconnected to. Instead we are called to teach people to discover the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5) so they can be used to their greatest potential.



*How do we
apply this?*

Teresa and Kendra now lead a study group on the weekends, inviting, but not pressuring their coworkers to connect.



A CLOSER LOOK

*How do we
apply this?*

Teresa finds an opportunity to lead a discipleship group at her work and Kendra is promoted to a new location. Kendra picks up at a new coffee shop.

In spite of the change both are offered new discipleship opportunities. They both continue walking in obedience with God and use His guidance to disciple others.



The Great Commandment

The great British scholar and pastor, John Stott, often said that our God is a missionary God. When we read through Scripture we discover that the God who created the universe continues to pursue a relationship with Israel even though they keep rejecting Him for other gods and in the New Testament we discover that God’s missionary spirit came in the form of human flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

What would motivate God to be that way? We could look in many texts within the Bible, but would find none more clear and persuasive than John 3:16. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” It was love that moved the Creator of the universe to redeem us.

What does that have to do with disciple making? Notice in this text the phrase, “the world.” God placed no limits on His willingness to love the whole world in sending His only Son. If love could motivate God to redeem us, it follows that until we learn to love like God loves, we will struggle to see ourselves as disciple makers.

But once we do move in that direction, we then view all humans—the world—as people God loves and in need of redemption. On one occasion (see Matthew 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-34, Luke 10:25-28) Jesus is asked about “the greatest commandment” or “to inherit eternal life.” These questioners aren’t really interested in what Jesus has to say in answer to the question but are determined to catch Him saying something incorrect. Jesus described the idea of “loving God” as the first and greatest of the commandments.

Then He said, “The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” Then He declared that it was on these two ideas—loving God and loving neighbor—that the entire Law and Prophets (a common Jewish way of referring to what we know



It was love
that moved
the Creator of
the universe to
redeem us.

as the Old Testament) depend. When he says “The second is like it” he doesn’t just mean that they both focus on love, he means that they are two halves of the same action, if we love God, then we will love our neighbor, why? Because He first loved us. In John 13:34 it says “even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”

You cannot love God without also loving others. He is not simply asking that we be kind and love each other, no this is referred to as the greatest commandment for a reason. All the laws and commands of God boil down to these two things, love God, and love others.

Before we keep going it’s important to define “What is love?” To keep it simple love is: ‘You First.’ The whole idea is wrapped around the needs of someone else coming before your own, conversely, evil is always: ‘Me First.’ When you think of the greatest love you have ever had someone express, it is usually one of sacrifice, conversely the greatest evil is one where someone is so consumed with themselves they trample over the needs of others.

So then where does the necessity of discipleship come in? John says this: “If



Love = You First
Evil = Me First

_____ someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his
_____ brother, he is a liar, for the one who does not
_____ love his brother whom he has seen, cannot
_____ love God whom he has not seen" (1 John
_____ 4:20). Earlier in this same context, John says,
_____ "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to
_____ love one another" (4:11).

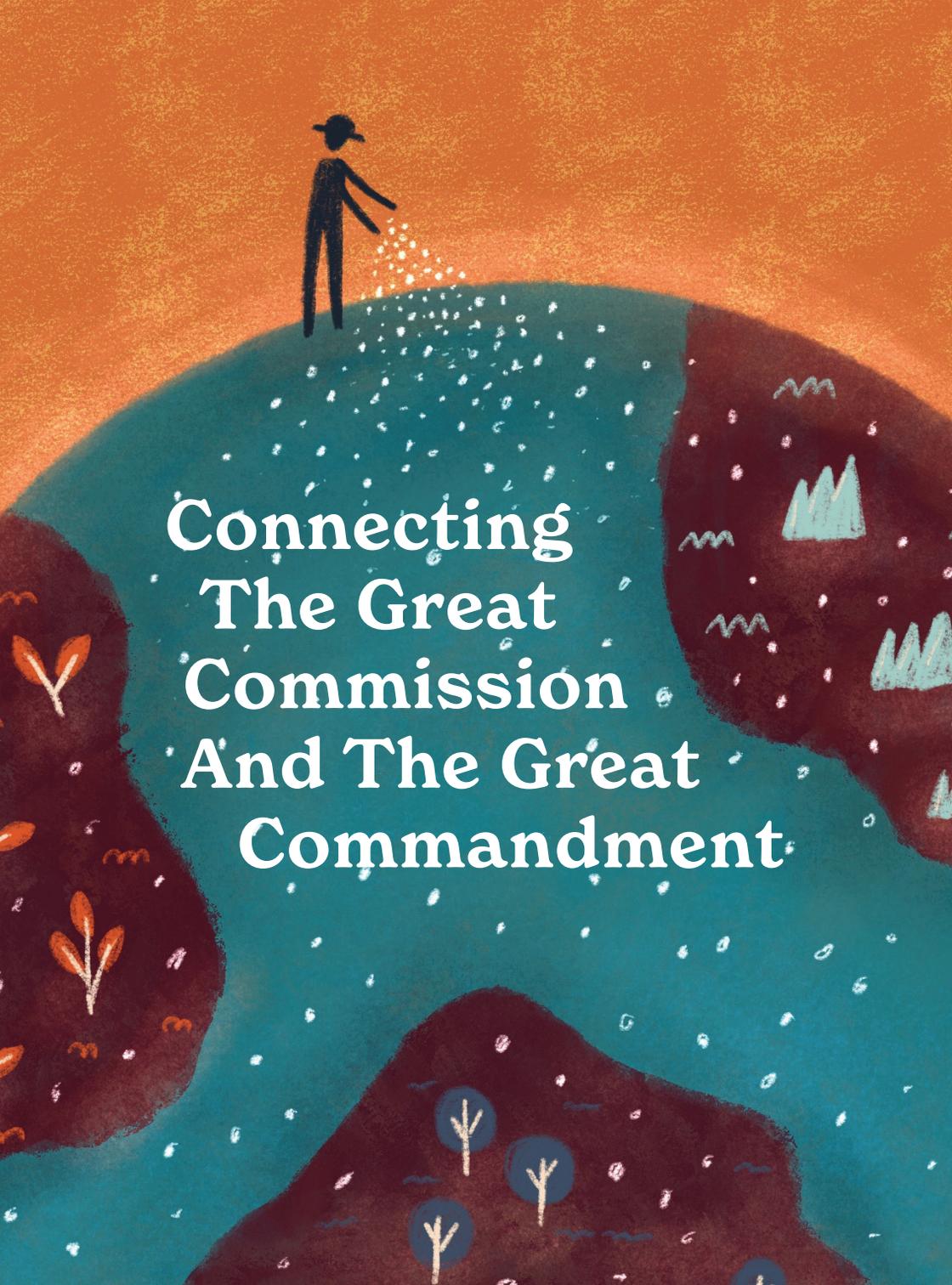
_____ Loving God means that we will find ways
_____ to make His love known to those around us—
_____ our neighbors, our co-workers, our fellow
_____ students, our family, and every conceivable
_____ interaction we might have in our lives. If we
_____ aren't engaged in disciple making, can we
_____ really say that we love God?

_____ Love will build bridges to those whom
_____ we see. Intentional discipleship enables,
_____ enhances, and equips others to obey the
_____ convicting work of the Holy Spirit. (See
_____ John 16:8-10). Jesus promised that a part of
_____ the Spirit's ministry to the world would be
_____ "to convict the world concerning sin, and
_____ righteousness and judgment" (16:8).

_____ Our love for our neighbor means that
_____ we are partnering with the Spirit in His work
_____ and the outcome will be new disciples.
_____ Remember that Paul reminds us that "no one
_____ can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy
_____ Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3) and we should
_____ remember that the Spirit is already at work to
_____ convict our neighbors, He partners with us as
_____ we bear witness.

'You shall love the
Lord your God with all
your heart, and with
all your soul, and with
all your mind.' This is
the great and foremost
commandment. The
second is like it,
'You shall love your
neighbor as yourself.'

Matthew 22:37-39

An illustration of a person in a black silhouette standing on the top of a globe. The globe is divided into three main sections: a teal section at the top, a dark brown section on the right, and a dark brown section on the left. The teal section is covered in a trail of white stars that starts from the person's hand and spreads across the globe. The dark brown sections contain stylized white and orange plants and trees. The background is a solid orange color.

**Connecting
The Great
Commission
And The Great
Commandment**

So how do we connect these two ideas, the Great Commission and the Great Commandment? The good news for you is that the two of them are tied together so tightly it would be very difficult for you to do the one without the other!

First, let's start with the Great Commandment, simply love God, and love others, well if you insert that attitude into your life what should happen? If you love God, you will love others, and if you love others then you will want them to know the same God that you know and love. At its most bare bones this is what discipleship is, a bringing in of the lost, so that they too may be awestruck by God, and motivated to bring others in.

This is where barn building gets us into the most trouble. They are more focused on bringing people into the church than they are with sending them out. It can be surprisingly easy to corral energetic Christians into a safe building where there is plenty of love for one another, and yet no drive to go out, to seek and save the lost.

When we think about the most incredible turnarounds in the lives of people in the Bible, it often involves where they meet God. When Moses meets God, it is not in the halls of power in Egypt nor it is in a temple. It is in the wilderness where Moses encounter the holy ground.

We know love by
this, that He laid
down His life for
us; and we ought to
lay down our lives
for the brothers
and sisters.

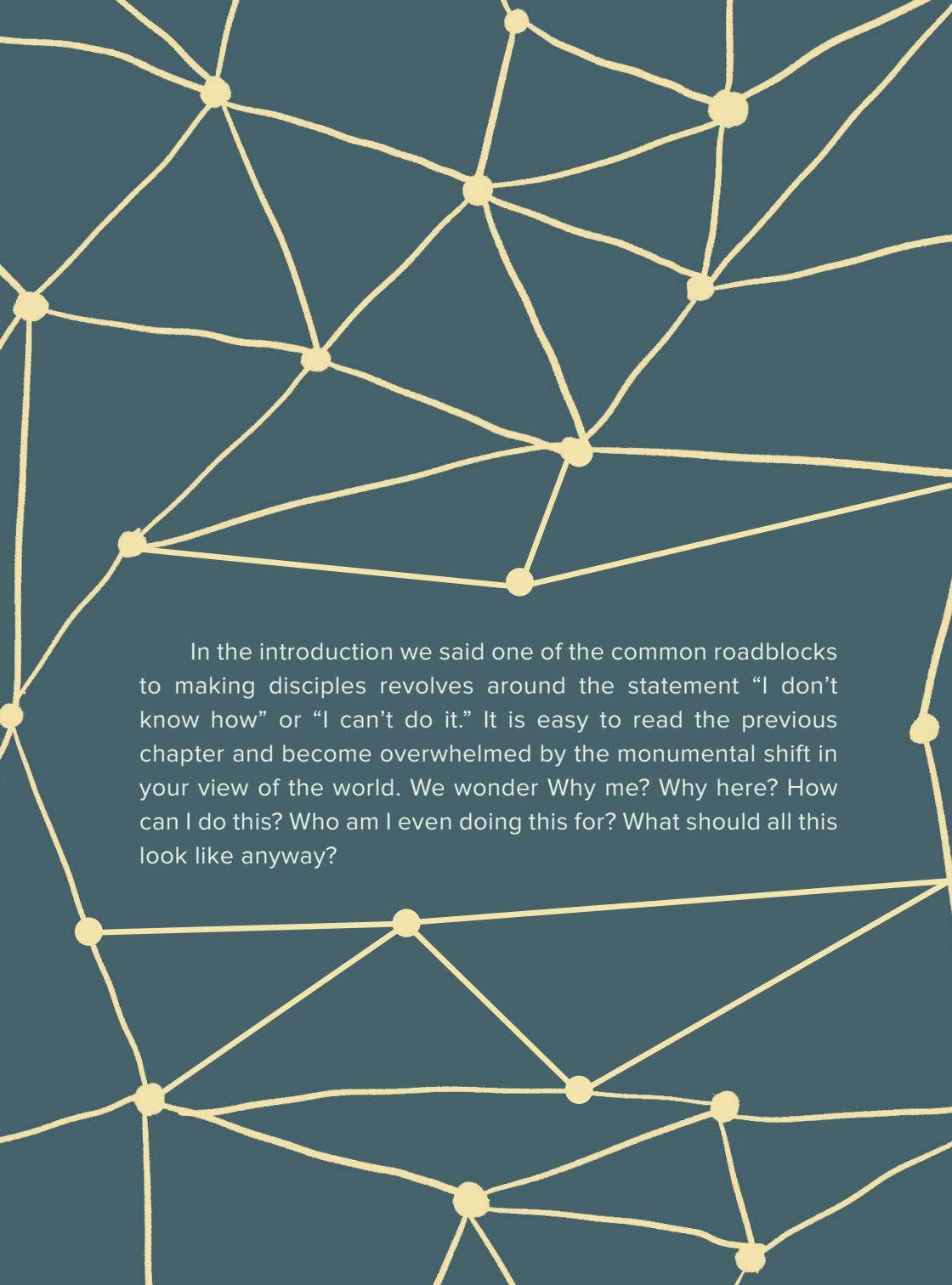
1 John 3:16

CHAPTER 2

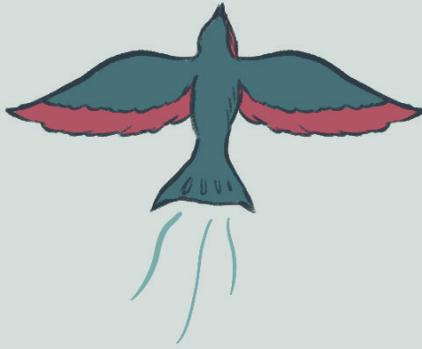
The Questions

WE ARE CONFRONTED
WITH INSURMOUNTABLE
OPPORTUNITIES.





In the introduction we said one of the common roadblocks to making disciples revolves around the statement “I don’t know how” or “I can’t do it.” It is easy to read the previous chapter and become overwhelmed by the monumental shift in your view of the world. We wonder Why me? Why here? How can I do this? Who am I even doing this for? What should all this look like anyway?



QUESTION #1

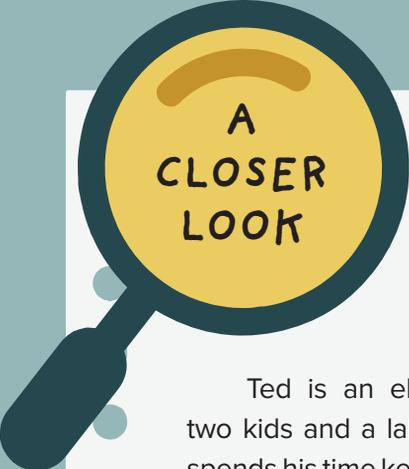
Why Me?

YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD AND
GOD'S SPIRIT LIVES IN YOU.





Go, I AM
sending
you!



A CLOSER LOOK

*How do we
apply this?*

Ted is an electrician who is married with two kids and a labrador. When not working, Ted spends his time keeping up with his team, Example City FC, fishing, and bowling. He has never had any training in theology and even struggles with motivation to attend church on Sundays.

“Surely,” Ted says to himself, “God would not call me to disciple, I am no pastor or even a good Christian.”

Yet without Ted who will reach his coworker that doesn't get out much except for work? Who will help the clerk at the bait and tackle shop smile even though they have had a terrible day? Who will answer the call of his bowling mate who feels as though something is missing from their life? Who will call for a truce when an argument breaks out at an EC FC game?

Most of all, who will guide his children and grow in God with his wife? Ted is practically drowning in opportunity that is unique to only him, and God desperately wants to use him there. So if not him then who?

Do you not know
that you are a
temple of God and
that the Spirit of
God dwells in you?

1 Corinthians 3:16



YOU ARE THE ARK OF THE
NEW COVENANT. EVERY STEP
YOU TAKE IS HOLY GROUND.

QUESTION #2

What Am I Doing Here?

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WILL



Elijah was one of the most powerful prophetic figures in the Old Testament. He goes toe to toe with an evil queen, armies of priests, causes droughts, and raises the dead.

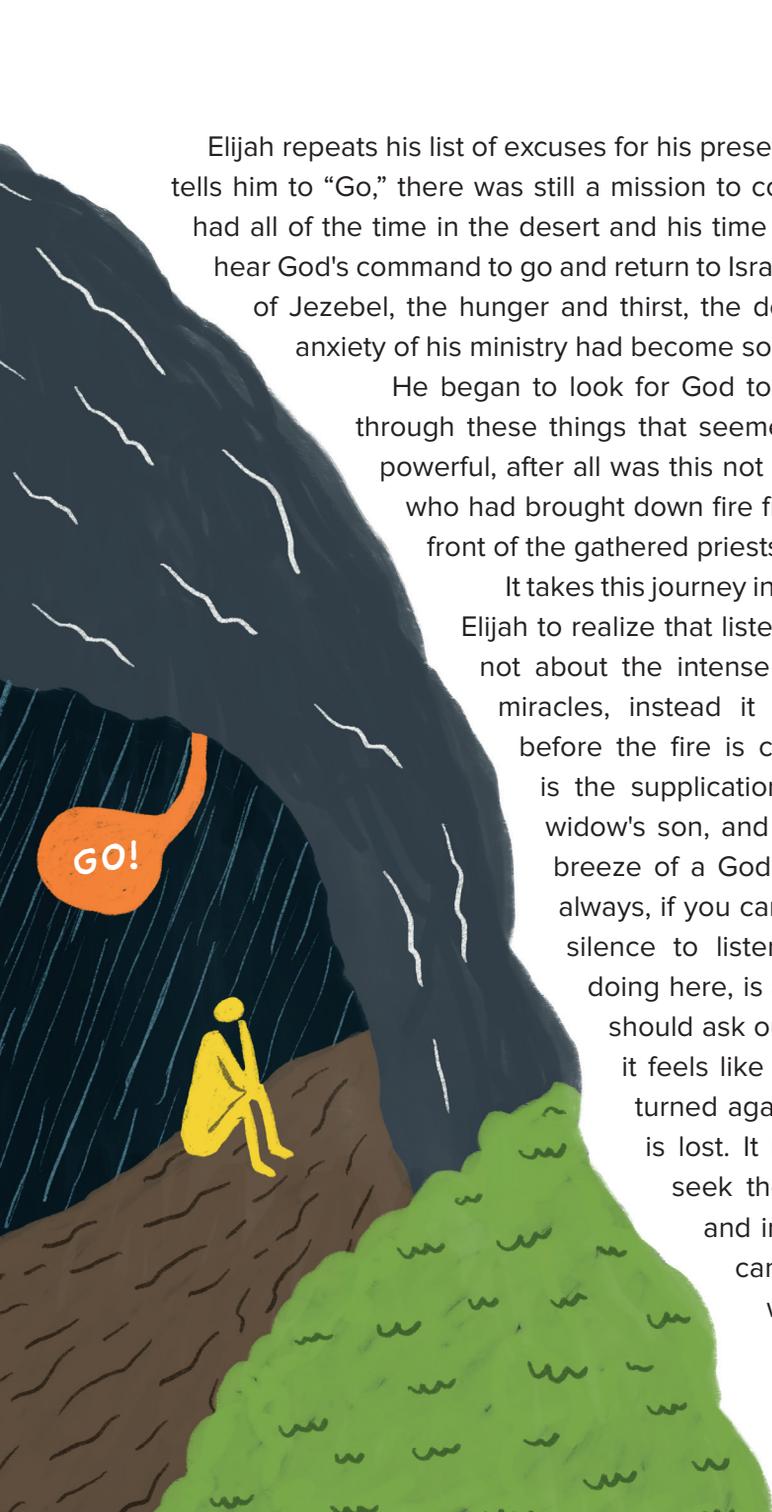
Surely here is an example of a stalwart servant of God! Yet Elijah lived in fear and after his life was threatened by the wicked Queen Jezebel he fled into the desert hoping that God would take his life.

God instead provides him with food and water, and eventually Elijah finds himself sitting at the back of a cave discouraged and depressed, ready to quit. In the midst of what he sensed as defeat the voice of the Lord came to Elijah and said, “What are you doing here Elijah” (1 Kings 19)?

Elijah boldly tells God that Israel had forsaken Him, that Israel has killed all the prophets, and that he is the only one left. To make matters worse, Elijah says, “I have been very zealous for the Lord.” This is the proverbial “life isn’t fair” mantra.

The Lord tells Elijah to get out of the cave. We are told that “the Lord was passing by!” (19:11) While standing there, Elijah experienced a great wind, an earthquake, and fire. But God was not in the wind and earthquake and fire.

Then Elijah hears a gentle, quiet wind. Elijah stands in the entrance to the cave. And the voice of God comes to him again, “Elijah, what are you doing here?”

An illustration of a person sitting on a brown cliff edge, looking down at a green bush. The background is dark blue with white lightning bolts and rain falling. An orange speech bubble with the word "GO!" is positioned near the person. The person is yellow, and the bush is green with wavy lines representing leaves.

Elijah repeats his list of excuses for his present misery. God tells him to “Go,” there was still a mission to complete. Elijah had all of the time in the desert and his time in the cave to hear God’s command to go and return to Israel, but the fear of Jezebel, the hunger and thirst, the depression and anxiety of his ministry had become so loud.

He began to look for God to speak to him through these things that seemed strong and powerful, after all was this not the same God who had brought down fire from heaven in front of the gathered priests of Baal?

It takes this journey into the cave for Elijah to realize that listening to God is not about the intense awe-inspiring miracles, instead it is the prayer before the fire is called down, it is the supplication to save the widow’s son, and it is the quiet breeze of a God who is there, always, if you can only find the silence to listen. What am I doing here, is a question we should ask ourselves when it feels like the world has turned against us and all is lost. It reminds us to seek the will of God, and in the quiet He can reveal where we are to go.

It is only after Elijah realizes this that his ministry takes off once again, the height of which is when Elijah finds Elisha and disciples him to become arguably and even greater prophet than Elijah himself.

The “what are you doing here?” question from God surrounds us in every moment of our lives. It demands a response from us. What are we doing at the moment and in this place? Why do we go to work? To school? To shop? To have dinner with our friends and neighbors? Perhaps even, “Why do we go to church?”

God always has something for us to do regardless of where we are. Elijah hid in a cave. Peter is taking it easy on a rooftop. Sometimes we hide in a barn. God wants to know, “What are you doing here?”

Here’s a simple test. Do we know the names of the people with whom we come into contact? Do we know the name of the cashier at the grocery store or gas station we visited this week? We may think that we are going to the store only to buy milk or eggs, but we are really there as a part of God’s plan so God can meet the cashier.

Every encounter we have with people is an opportunity to share God’s love. These people are a continuous opportunity that passes through our daily lives.



A CLOSER LOOK

*How do we
apply this?*

Ted is at an Example City FC game when a fan of Metaphor United knocks the nachos out of an EC FC fan's hands by accident and it looks like a fight is brewing. Ted originally came here to watch the game, but after asking himself, "What am I doing here?" He sees that there is an opportunity here. Ted offers to buy both parties new nachos, so there is no harm.

Will this change the lives of the two belligerent parties? Probably not, but it will have a profound impact on those around the incident. A fight would have been something to watch but the kindness of a complete stranger is something you tell people about the next day.

QUESTION #3

How Do I Even Start?

LOOK AT WHAT YOU HAVE.
WHAT'S IN YOUR HANDS?



Let's get back to the story of Moses and the burning bush. One of the most relatable questions that Moses asks God that we might have when starting our discipleship journey is, "What if they don't believe or listen to me" (Exodus 4:1)? In a response more revealing than Moses likely realized, God responded to him with a question. "What do you have in your hand?"

Moses was raised the son of a Pharaoh's daughter, royalty of one of the most powerful kingdoms of its day, but when he encounters the burning bush he is nothing but a lowly shepherd working for his father-in-law.

He likely owns little to nothing, except his trusty walking stick. God tells him to throw it on the ground and it turns to a snake! Shortly afterward God tells him to pick it back up, another exercise in trusting God. After this God tells Moses to put his hand in his cloak. When he pulls it back out it is covered in leprosy, practically a slow agonizing death sentence in those days. When he returns it to the cloak again it comes back clean and purified.

Moses is in service to a God that has absolute power over all things, so it is not a matter of how much money you have, what car you drive, or education you possess.

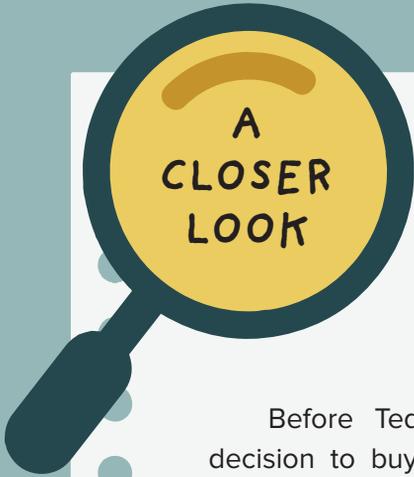
You serve a God who can cure disease, call down fire, create life, and already knows

_____ the limitations of your circumstances and yet
_____ chose you for this mission. You have all that
_____ you need to achieve His purpose, the only
_____ thing you need is absolute trust in Him.

_____ The question finally becomes this: Will
_____ we use our lives for ourselves or for God?
_____ Will we seek to build bridges that enable us
_____ to make disciples or choose to hide in fear,
_____ doubt, and even disobedience? Moses was
_____ asked by God, "What is in your hand?" He
_____ answered, "A staff." That staff shows up in the
_____ Exodus story over and over.

_____ We should faithfully and honestly look at
_____ what it is that God has placed in our hands.
_____ Then, in humble obedience, seek to use it to
_____ God's glory. Remember, God has not called us
_____ to do what He is unwilling to equip us to do.

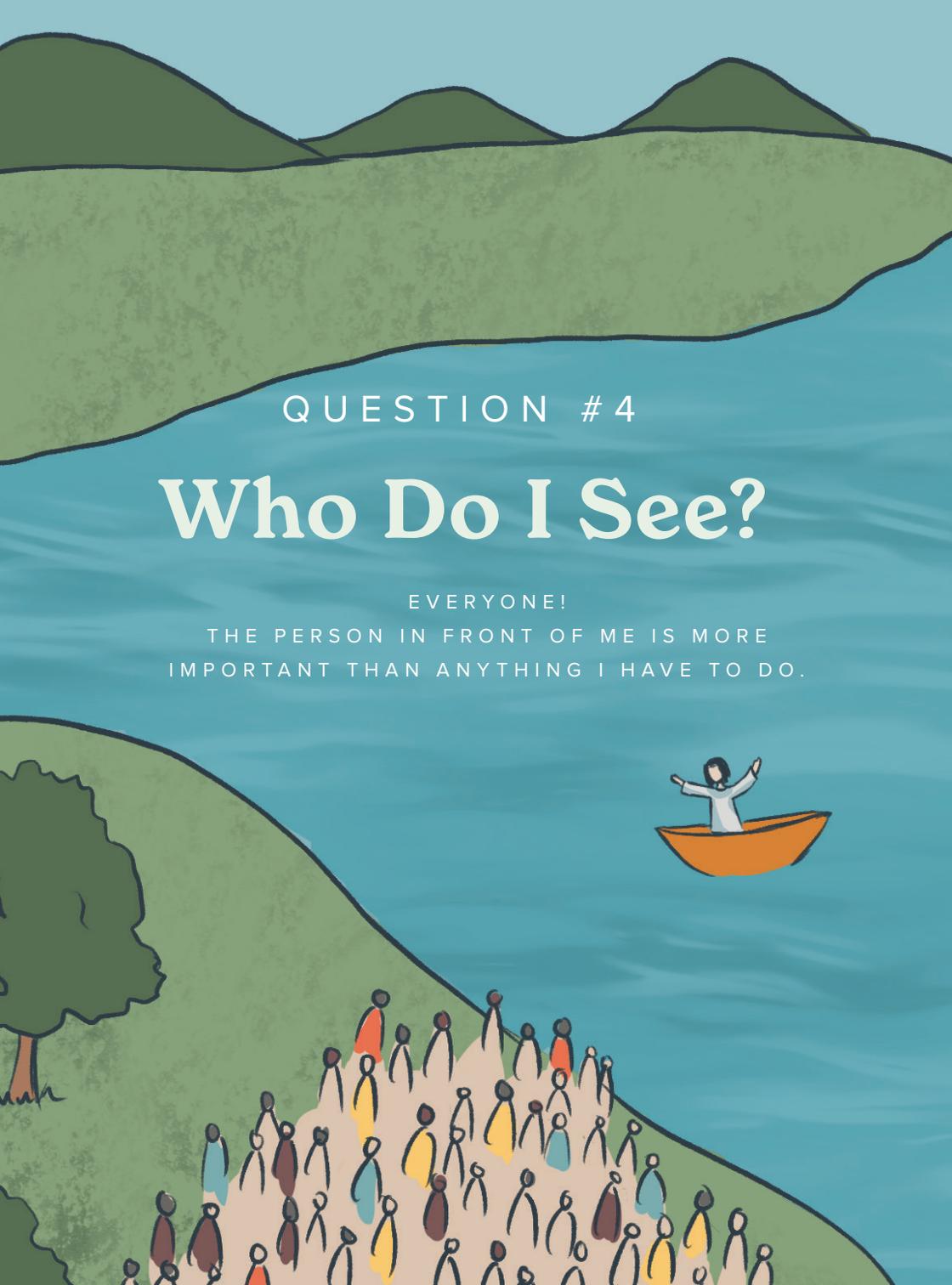
_____ **God does not**
_____ **call us to**
_____ **what He won't**
_____ **equip us to do.**



A CLOSER LOOK

*How do we
apply this?*

Before Ted could have made his decision to buy nachos at the game, it would have been easy to say, “I’ll let someone else handle it, I don’t even know them!” Instead he looked at what he had, in this case his wallet. With only that he was able to make an impact, even if he doesn’t see it.



QUESTION #4

Who Do I See?

EVERYONE!

THE PERSON IN FRONT OF ME IS MORE
IMPORTANT THAN ANYTHING I HAVE TO DO.

In Mark 4, Jesus is spending the day along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. So many people are interested in Him that He had to get in a boat a short distance from the shore and teach from there.

His focus that day, as it was on most days, was the Kingdom of God. When Jesus talked about the kingdom of God, He often told stories, parables. On this particular day He tells the story of the sower who went out sowing that we have looked at earlier and will see again later.

He talks about the mystery of seed growing secretly. He talks about a tiny mustard seed, which actually grew into a shrub big enough for birds to build nests.

God has called us to sow seeds, not compare resumes. In 2 Timothy 2:15 Paul tells young Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself approved to God ... ” Notice Paul doesn’t tell Timothy, “your best needs to match my best.” And he doesn’t say, “do as well as Titus is doing.” He simply says, “do your best.”

The “you” of this text is singular, not plural. We don’t need to spend our lives wanting to be something other than God has made us. He is interested in my best for me; and your best for you.

The disciples were slow to understand these crucial principles of the Kingdom. This

_____ is a brand-new way of living and they are
_____ struggling to put their full trust in God.

_____ In Mark 4:35, Jesus says, “Let us go over
_____ to the other side.” They know by now that
_____ Jesus is always on the move, but they could
_____ not have known all that was in store for them.

_____ While crossing over the sea, Jesus fell
_____ asleep and out of nowhere a huge storm
_____ arose. The boat is about to sink. Frantic as
_____ they were, they awake Jesus and asked,
_____ “Don’t you care that we are about to
_____ drown?” Jesus got up and rebuked the wind
_____ and said to the sea, “Hush, be still.” The wind
_____ died down. The sea became calm. Jesus
_____ wonders aloud to them, “How is it that you
_____ have no faith?”

_____ For the disciples, their question exposes
_____ the real problem. They say, “Who is this? Even
_____ the wind and waves obey Him!” (Mark 4:41)
_____ They have yet to fully realize who Jesus is.

_____ When they arrive on the other side of the
_____ Sea, they are met with a demon possessed
_____ man who was running around naked and lived
_____ in a cemetery. The demon said its name was
_____ “Legion” because there were so many demons.

_____ Jesus powerfully casts out the demon
_____ and the man becomes sane, calm, and in
_____ control of his behavior. Jesus tells the man to
_____ go to his own people and testify as to what
_____ Jesus had done for him.

Soon Jesus is ready to cross the Sea once again (5:21). It would be interesting to know what the disciples thought about that suggestion! Could it be that Jesus came all the way across the Sea of Galilee just for this one man?

Would that be beyond the kind of love Jesus showed every day during His ministry on earth? This man was changed and sent to tell about Jesus to the ten cities in the region known as Decapolis.

When they got back to the other side, another large crowd has gathered. Jesus has an encounter with a man named Jairus, a synagogue official whose daughter was dying.

While on the way to the house of Jairus, a woman who had been ill with hemorrhaging touched Him and was immediately healed. Jesus seems to always be willing to be interrupted. He stops and tells this woman, "Daughter, your faith has healed you" (Mark 5:34).

It was during that conversation that people come to tell Jairus that his daughter was dead. Jesus goes to the house and raises her back to life.

These stories can speak in powerful fashion to us because if Jesus was never too busy to notice the people around Him, shouldn't we be the same? He often went out



There are
people all
around us
who are
looking
for Jesus
but do
not know
where to
find Him.





A CLOSER LOOK

*How do we
apply this?*

An average day for Ted might look something like this. He wakes up and is running a little late, so decides to grab coffee on the way to work. Once he arrives he is sent to an apartment where some work needs to get done. He grabs lunch at noon from a nearby fast food restaurant before heading back. The work day finishes and he fills up his tank before picking the kids up from baseball practice, giving one of their friends a ride home. Once they arrive home, they eat dinner and Ted finishes up a few chores before relaxing until bed.

Over that one day Ted met people God could have pointed him toward. The cashier at the coffee shop, fast food restaurant and gas station. His coworkers or customers at the apartment. His kids, their coach, or their friends. Likely there are even more! Everyone that Ted sees over the course of that day is someone God may be using him to meet!

A sunburst graphic with several yellow lines radiating from the top center, framing the words "WE ARE".

WE ARE
GOING TO
seek out
OPPORTUNITIES
TO BE
DISCIPLE
makers

QUESTION #5

What If Everyone Made Disciples Like Me?



When writing what we know as his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul places the issue of disciple making in its biblical context when he says, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). The Kingdom New Testament translates this verse as “Copy me as I am copying the Messiah.”

Even Paul, with all of his giftedness as a disciple maker, is careful to make sure that he is not placing himself in the center of attention. He wants Christ to be the center of our attention. It is a central issue for every believer that we live in a way that others see Christ in us as they use our life’s witness as an example for their own.

This is the question we must address: is my interest in disciple making reflective of Christ, and thus worthy of being an example to other believers? Just before Paul makes the “copy me as I copy the Messiah” comment, he has expressed to his friends in Corinth what makes his own interest in disciple making work.

In 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, he describes a variety of cultural contexts that surrounded him on a regular basis. He is willing to identify with each of those cultural realities in order to make disciples. Five times in this brief paragraph, he uses the word “win.” Then, where we would expect it a sixth time, he replaces “win” with “save.”

home to Emmaus after the tumultuous events of Jerusalem over the past few days. The full story can be found in Luke 24:13-35.

The two are down-hearted and concerned, because the one they thought to be Messiah had been crucified. All of a sudden, Jesus is walking with them, but they don't recognize Him. One of them, Cleopas, tells the story of Jesus to this stranger now walking with them when He asked them what was going on.

Cleopas actually gives a good summary of the good news but is not able to make the connections in his mind between the events that happened in Jerusalem with Jesus and the message of Jesus.

Then this stranger—their eyes are still being prevented from recognizing Him (24:16)—begins to explain all the Bible had to say about Jesus. As Luke says, He “began with Moses and the Prophets and explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures” (24:27). When they arrive in Emmaus, the stranger appeared to continue His journey, but they insisted that He stay with them for dinner.

At the dinner table, He took bread and blessed it, and gave it to them. At that very moment, “their eyes were opened and they recognized Him, and He vanished from their sight” (24:31).

less room we give to the Holy Spirit as He seeks to use our witness to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

We can never forget and never fail to remind others, that the goal is to follow Messiah, not a person. An honest appraisal of our own lives in light of these five questions may tell us that we have some work to do on ourselves.

We may discover some anger, some racism, some classism, or just a generally bad attitude. We may discover sin in our own lives that makes us uncomfortable when we are on “holy ground.” Whatever we discover that isn’t spiritually healthy, we need to seek the Holy Spirit’s help in ridding ourselves of that unhealthy quality.

For many Westerners, we might discover an unhealthy sense of individuality and a kind of ego-centric spirit that places “me and my desires” at the center of life. That can’t be allowed to continue. What if we had the courage to allow these five questions to call us to re-evaluate ourselves. They can challenge us to look carefully at how we spend each day.

They can call us to refocus our lives on Jesus. Taken to heart, they confront our selfishness and urge us to listen to the Holy Spirit and God’s plan for us each and every day. Before we seek to make disciples who look like us, we need to be confident that we look like Jesus.

The more we
insist that we
are the center of
disciple making,
the less room
we give to the
Holy Spirit as He
seeks to use our
witness to convict
the world of sin,
righteousness, and
judgment.

CHAPTER 3

Practicing Discipleship as a Lifestyle



It is all well and good to tell someone that they must “go and make disciples” and when they ask questions about who and how you reply everyone everywhere all the time.

The Scottish poet Robert Burns famously wrote, “The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry.” That is why this must not simply be a plan that we approach a person within the hopes of discipleship, instead discipleship should be an instinctual part of how we live, so just like the morning cup of coffee we brew to wake up, so too should our lifestyle of discipleship be a part of our daily routine.

In order to change discipleship from being a task that you engage into a lifestyle that you live, we must focus on two important aspects. Firstly, what do we take in from the outside, and secondly, what do we cultivate on the inside. Just like you disciple other people you must also focus on the habits of being a good disciple yourself.

Listening



If you want to become healthier, the first and most important step is to eat healthily. So to must we take in healthy food for our soul.

Have you ever noticed that most humans have two ears but only one tongue? The instant response is always well, of course I have noticed that! Then ask yourself, how many people do you know that listen twice as much as they talk?



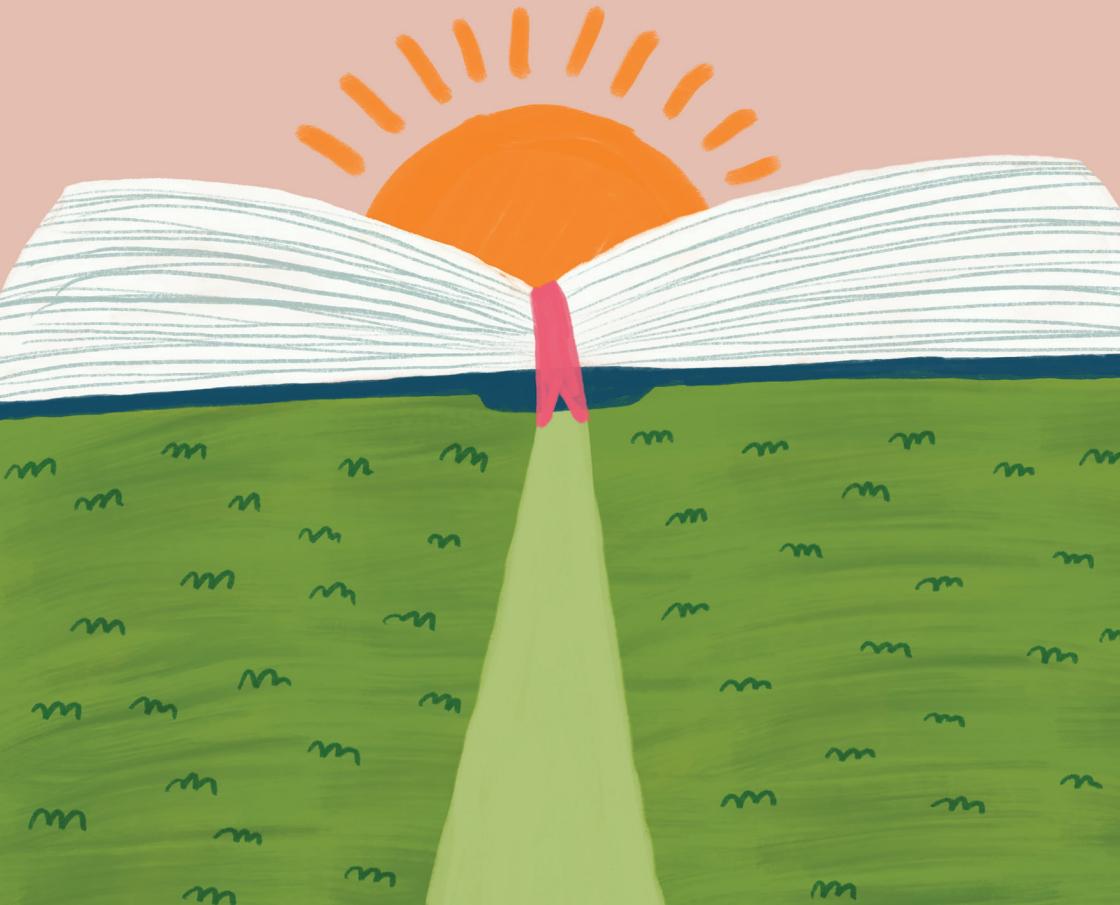
The answer is probably many, and maybe sometimes including ourselves. So why is listening the first habit we must learn? Sometimes in teaching about discipleship we can lose sight of Who we are disciples to, it is not simply that we are the disciples of those who disciplined us, no we are turning people to be disciples of Christ!

If you are a disciple of Christ then your first priority should be to listen to Him, but how do we best do that? It is not as simple as reading an instruction book, or calling Him up on the phone and asking Him, "What do I do? ... or is it?"



Scripture

It turns out there is an instruction book that has been specifically left for you that relates specifically to you! In fact there are even instructions in the book telling you how important it is to read the book. In Psalm 1, the psalmist declares that those who please God are characterized as one who “delight in the law of the Lord ... and in His law he meditates day and night,” and Psalm 119:105 says “Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.” Our path towards becoming fruitful disciple makers is impossible without connection to the Scripture.





A CLOSER LOOK

*How do we
apply this?*

Joanna finds it hard to understand what it means to 'listen' to God. Her friend recommends that she take the time to read through all of Matthew. After Joanna finishes it, she returns to her friend and says "I still can't hear what Jesus is saying!" Her friend looks at her confused. "What do you mean? You just read a whole book of things he said to you."

Observation

A SCRIPTURE READING HOW-TO GUIDE

Observation involves reading and re-reading the passage—which should always be at least a paragraph, a unit of thought, not a stand-alone verse. It can be very helpful to “pray through the text as you read.”

The late British preacher John Stott once said *“the most important time I spend in my study is the time I spend on my knees with the text.”*

Observation can involve identifying people, places, and things. It can involve identifying important theological ideas and concepts. Are there any imperatives in the text? Start a “journal on the text” and write these observations down. Questions and answers. It is hard to read anything, and especially a biblical text, without asking the famous “W questions:” who, what, where, when, and why? We might also want to include “How?” These are the questions that are likely to lead us to wanting to find good resources to help us answer them. We might also ask some grammar related questions—like, “What is the primary subject of this sentence? Or the primary verb? What about the antecedents of the pronouns? These kinds of questions can go on and on!

When studying Scripture, it is of utmost importance that we study it in paragraphs not individual verses. No biblical writer divided his writing into chapter and verses, but every good writer (including biblical writers) writes in units of thought around an idea. That is what a paragraph is. When you identify the paragraph under consideration, you can look at it through the lens of four important questions.

First, is **“meaning as referent,”** where you ask “what is the author talking about (referring to)?”

Second, is **meaning as sense,** “what does the author say about what he is talking about?”

Third, is **meaning as intention,** “what does the author (human and divine) intend the text to say?”

And fourth, is **meaning as significance,** “what significance does this text have in my life?” Meaning as significance of course leads to the call for obedience.

If this text has taught us God’s intended meaning and we have discovered application in our lives for that meaning, it will help us to know God better and to know His people better. We could simply ask, “How does this text teach me to love God and love neighbor more effectively?” This is one of those places in our spiritual journeys where we should anticipate the Holy Spirit working “to convict us of sin, judgment, and righteousness” (John 16:8-10).

Prayer



Prayer is listening.

A few paragraphs ago we talked about people who tend to talk more than they listen. It can be incredibly frustrating to carry on a meaningful conversation when the words are one-sided. It is impossible to get to know someone if you spend every conversation with them talking only about yourself.

The same concept applies to prayer. So often prayer is talked about as a sort of 'comments and complaints' suggestion box for God. Rather than what it should be, a conversation. When praying we often want to simply unload all of our prayer requests, or even praises on Him, then we finish it up with an Amen and carry on with our day.

If you had a friend who only ever called you when they needed to rant or complain about something every other day and that was the only time you ever talked, would that be a fulfilling friendship? Of course not!

So then why do we treat prayer the same way? Well, because listening is hard to fit within your own time frame. It's easy to make time to pray every day if you know you will spend exactly five minutes every morning offloading your worries and then heading

to work. If you are the only one talking then you know exactly how long it will take, but listening?

What if they won't stop talking, what if they ask questions I don't know the answer to, what if I can't hear them? That could take forever! The answer is in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 "Pray without ceasing." This is meant to be a conversation that never ends.

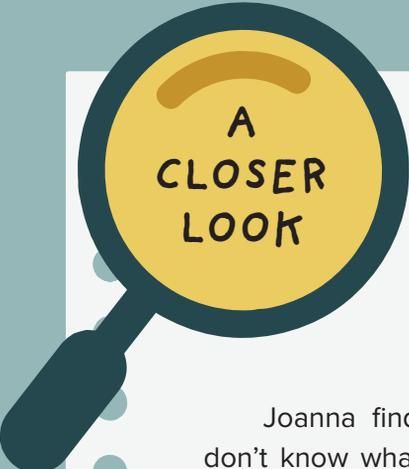
So what do we do? We need to work, pay bills, make food, and get out there and make disciples. How are we supposed to do that when we have to spend all this time praying without ceasing? The good news is that the person we are supposed to be disciplined after provides the perfect example of this. Jesus is our model for prayer. As His followers, we can learn from Him—what He prayed about, when He prayed, and how He prayed.

The four gospels are filled with references to Him praying. Here are some samples:

- **He prayed alone.** (Matthew 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 9:18; 22:39-41)
- **He prayed in public.** (John 11:41,42; 12:27-30)
- **He prayed before meals.** (Matthew 26:26; Mark 8:6; Luke 24:30; John 6:11)
- **He prayed before important decisions.** (Luke 6:12-13)
- **He prayed before healing.** (Mark 7:34,35)
- **He prayed after healing.** (Luke 5:16)
- **He prayed to do His Father's will.** (Matthew 26:36-44)

Jesus taught His disciples about prayer on numerous occasions

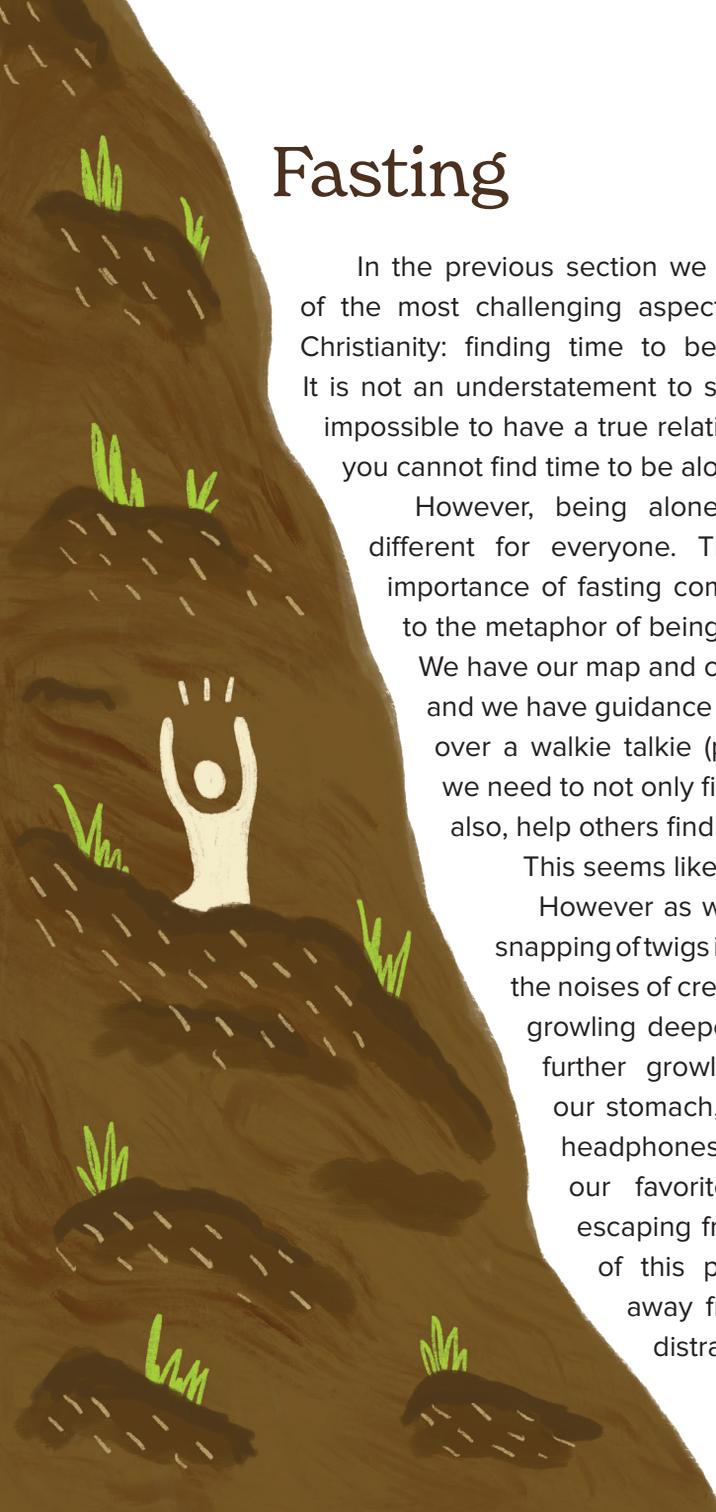
- Matthew 6:9-13; 7:7-11; 18:19-20; 21:22
- Mark 11:24-26
- Luke 11:2-4; 11:9-13
- John 14:13,14; 15:7; 15:16; 16:23-34



A CLOSER LOOK

*How do we
apply this?*

Joanna finds prayer difficult. “I just don’t know what I am supposed to say!” She says exasperatedly to her friend. “Perhaps that’s the problem, maybe you just need to make room for quiet with Him. You have that long commute to work, maybe turn off the radio and just listen for Him, that is prayer too!”



Fasting

In the previous section we brushed over one of the most challenging aspects of modern day Christianity: finding time to be alone with God. It is not an understatement to say that it is nearly impossible to have a true relationship with God if you cannot find time to be alone with Him.

However, being alone with Him looks different for everyone. This is where the importance of fasting comes in. Let's return to the metaphor of being lost in the woods. We have our map and compass (Scripture) and we have guidance from a park ranger over a walkie talkie (prayer), everything we need to not only find our way out but also, help others find their way out.

This seems like it will be easy!

However as we walk, we hear a snapping of twigs in the undergrowth, the noises of creatures hooting and growling deeper in the woods, a further growling in the pit of our stomach, and we have our headphones in listening to our favorite podcast about escaping from the woods. All of this pulls our attention away from the map, and distracts us from the

guidance over the walkie talkie. This is where the importance of listening runs straight into the real world, full of its distractions, needs, noises, difficulties, and delightful podcasts.

So how do we eliminate the noise and return our focus to listening? Fasting. Fasting is something you can find throughout the Old and New Testament, what it essentially boils down to is this: Remove yourself from distractions and desires “Most often food” for a set period of time to refocus on listening to God. David, Ahab, Esther, the Ninevites, the Jewish exiles, the Disciples, and Jesus himself fasted and prayed. Jesus in particular fasted for forty days and forty nights in Matthew 4 at the very start of His ministry.

When Jesus went to fast in the wilderness, He was tempted by Satan. Satan first offers to meet a basic need, food. Satan is saying to Him, I can fulfill your desire to be comfortable. Jesus answers him “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

Rebuking him, by saying my fulfillment comes from God, not the comfort of the world. Satan then offers Him the chance of instant fame, by having angels stop His fall in front of the temple. Jesus rebukes this saying “Do not put the Lord your God to the test” (Matthew 4:7).

“Worship
the Lord
your God,
and serve
Him only.”



A CLOSER LOOK

*How do we
apply this?*

The morning commute prayer has helped Joanna pray much more effectively but she finds her mind wandering and frequently gets distracted by rude drivers while she is en route. Each morning now instead of her usual breakfast she instead uses that time to sit in quiet with God before work and on days off. She is hungry more often before lunch, but that hunger reminds her to pray for those around her more often than she ever did before.

Character
IS OUR
AUTHENTIC
Self



Character

Getting back to farming metaphors, the first half of this chapter is about what you take in—the seed, water, and fertilizer of discipleship. We have all the ingredients we need to create a disciple who makes disciples, but if we don't put in the work, it will never come to fruition. What you decide to cultivate within you is your character, the way in which you act by instinct. However, it is not as simple as taking the Scripture, prayer, and fasting, mixing it all together and now we instinctively are ready to go. Now each of the following sections are areas of discipline we will have to learn. We have sown, fertilized, and watered. Now comes the weeding, pruning, and harvesting.



A CLOSER LOOK

*How do we
apply this?*

Joanna has found that her phone tends to dominate her attention throughout the day. Not because she actively needs to communicate with anyone, but simply that she is killing time while she waits for the next thing she has to do. Often this means mindlessly scrolling through social media, fiddling with a game, or simply looking at pictures from more exciting days. Joanna decides if she wants to be a more effective disciple maker she will have to wrestle back this time from her phone and return it to God.

Simplicity

First, let's talk about weeds. Anyone who gardens knows that one of the most difficult parts of gardening is weeding, not because pulling up a weed itself is particularly difficult (although some can be) but because it is a constant battle. Everyday you must labor to keep them at bay, whether you spray, mulch or pull up by hand it is consistent work to keep your garden free of weeds.

Why fight so hard to keep weeds out? Weeds will slowly but surely suck all of the nutrients and water from the soil, and even occasionally block the sunlight from reaching the tree you want to grow, and if not dealt with, will eventually kill your tree essentially by starving them of what they need.

So too with ourselves. In the modern world we are absolutely plagued by 'stuff.' This includes physical things, the 'stuff' we own, and the 'stuff' we have to do. In a consumption driven world it is often difficult to avoid gathering physical things around us, and it is even more difficult to avoid having the world fill up our life with 'stuff' to do.

This life of acquiring 'stuff' and getting to our 'stuff' to do is not what we were called to instead in Matthew 6:33 when He said, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." Notice Jesus does not say "put His kingdom and His righteousness" on your priority list. Rather the point is, "His kingdom and His righteousness" is your priority list. Period. It is time to weed out our daily life.

When Jesus commissioned the Twelve and sent them out on a disciple-making journey (Matthew 10:5-15; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6) it was a trip marked by a call for simplicity. He told them,

_____ “Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for
_____ your money belts, or a bag for your journey, or
_____ even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the
_____ worker is worthy of his support.”

_____ In the Sermon on the Mount He tells those
_____ sitting on the hillside listening to Him, “For this
_____ reason I say to you, do not be worried about
_____ your life, as to what you will eat or what you
_____ will drink; nor for your body, as to what you
_____ will put on. Is not life more than food, and the
_____ body more than clothing” (Matthew 6:25)?

_____ That idea is followed by His beautiful
_____ reminder that our God is a God who provides.
_____ This allows us to more easily move towards
_____ Simplicity, you do not need to acquire ‘stuff,’
_____ because God will provide what you need.

_____ Simplicity makes it more likely that we
_____ will love our neighbor because our love
_____ for God (and keeping His commandments)
_____ supersedes our love for our possessions.
_____ Jesus, remember, defined the greatest
_____ commandment as “loving God with all our
_____ heart, soul, and mind” (Matthew 23:37). All
_____ mean all, not some.

_____ No part of who we are and what we are
_____ can be left out. That gives us time for mission.
_____ When we have time in our lives for mission, we
_____ can realize that a stop by a convenience store
_____ to pick up a gallon of milk on the way home
_____ could potentially be much more than that.

We can actually think that our encounter with the clerk who checks us out is more than a financial exchange and has potential to be a missional moment in life.

What can we do in order to start moving our lives in the direction of simplicity? We can begin by deliberately praying and fasting for those whom God has placed in our paths.

When we learn to pray for people by name (or by place when we don't know a name, e.g., the clerk at the convenience store) we will gain more courage and more commitment to love them as God loves them. But loving is not simply an emotion, John tells us "let us not only love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth" (1 John 3:18).

In Galatians 5:6, Paul reminds us that our physical status isn't the real issue, but "faith working through love" is what counts. Every one of the seven-plus billion people alive today are made in the image of God. Each one of them, "the crowds" of Matthew 9:36-38, has worth and value to God. We should praise God that the path of some of these billions of people and our own path will cross. How we celebrate this opportunity will have a huge impact on our disciple making for the Kingdom.

When we have time in our lives for mission, we can realize that a stop by a convenience store to pick up a gallon of milk on the way home could potentially be much more than that.



A CLOSER LOOK

*How do we
apply this?*

For Joanna simplicity means leaving her phone at home when she goes out to run errands. Sometimes it means that she will miss a message for an hour or two, oftentimes it means she is bored when waiting on something. This simplicity however forces her to see those around her, now she makes conversation with the clerk, is more intentional about thanking helpful staff, and is ready to help those that seem like they could use some assistance with their own errands.

Submission and Service

Now that we have grown our sapling out of the reach of most weeds, and are vigilantly keeping watch for more we can move on to the next important part of our character growth: Pruning. Pruning is when you remove dead, dying, or dangerous branches and stubs allowing for new growth, healthy flowering, and ensuring structural stability.

One of the defining characteristics of someone filled with the spirit is found in Ephesians 5, where Paul describes what someone who is filled with the Spirit is like, ending with “to be subject to one another in the fear of Christ” (Ephesians 5:21).

Similarly in Matthew 20:26-28 Jesus tells His disciples “whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and who wishes to be first among you shall be your slave, Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Trees and bushes if left untreated will grow in whatever direction suits them, but that does not necessarily mean that it is the best way for them to grow. Only through pruning away at the things we want and feel like we deserve will we realize that there is a better way. We do this by submitting to the word of God, listening to His direction, and putting the needs of others ahead of our own. Submission means you give up your control, and service means you accept the needs of others over yours.



*How do we
apply this?*

Now that Joanna is in the habit of leaving her phone at home when she won't need it, she has proven that she can go without it. Now comes the hard part, learning not to pick it up through the rest of the day. Instead every time she feels the urge to start mindlessly scrolling she asks herself Whom do I see? (A technique she picked up from learning to fast). Now instead of pulling up social media, she helps the elderly carry bags, calls a friend to ask how they are doing, makes conversation with someone who seems lonely, or simply sits and listens to God for what He may have in store for them today.

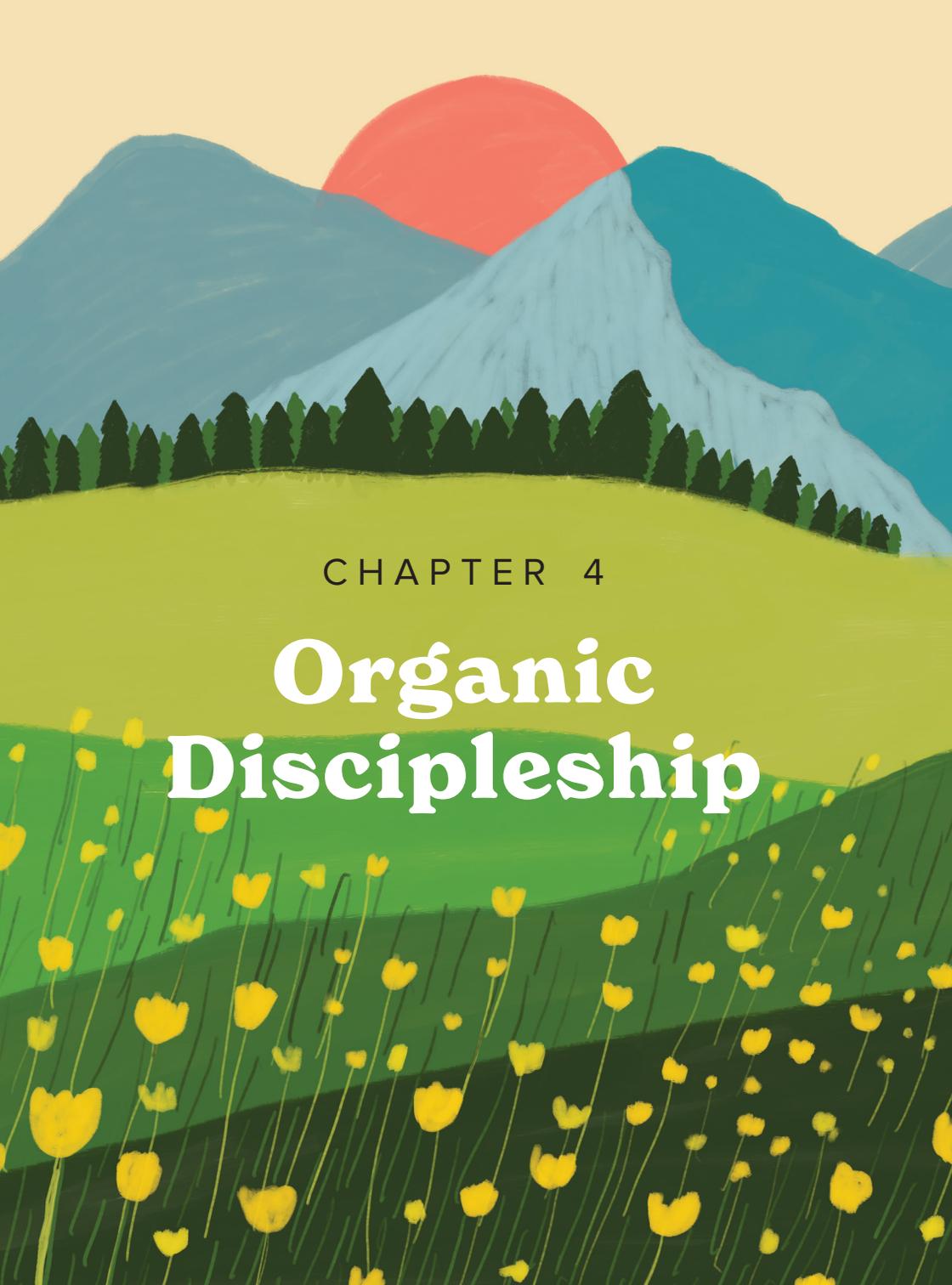
Our holiness
before God is
dependent upon
our willingness
to live like Jesus
which means
we will love
like Jesus.



A CLOSER LOOK

*How do we
apply this?*

Now that Joanna is in the habit of submitting to what she wants to do (mindlessly scrolling) for what God wants (seeing those around her), she has begun to be opened to a whole new world. Now she is no longer simply 'Joanna' she is 'Joanna: Temple of God on the move.' Wherever she goes, she brings love, kindness, and holiness to those who may have never seen it on the face of someone at the laundromat, fast food restaurant, or DMV.



CHAPTER 4

Organic Discipleship



Thus far we have talked about how to encourage discipleship in an individual and the effects that can have on the wider world around. The individual is the easy part when it comes to changing perspective on discipleship, which is good because that's how true discipleship begins, with individuals.

Eventually however we must work to shift some of the ideas that have become entrenched in Christians as a whole.

This chapter will seek to meet the stubborn barn building attitude head on, and is therefore very heavy in theology, while some may say “I’ll leave theology to the theologians”, it is important to know what organic discipleship really means for churches and the wider Christian community, because so often today they have become expert barn builders, and terrible farmers.

The Hardened Path



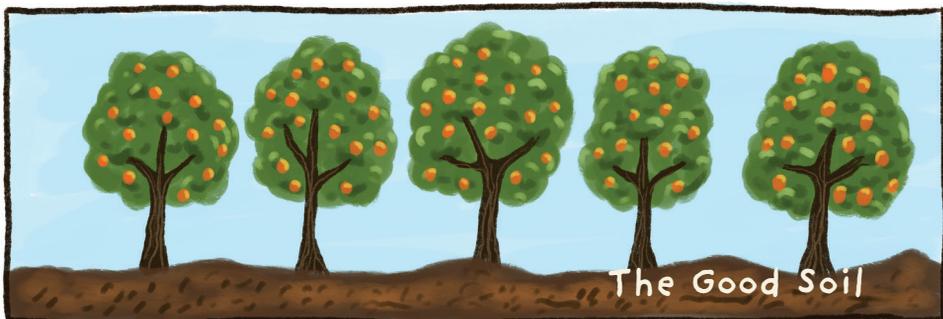
A Rocky Soil



Among The Weeds



The Good Soil



Sow with Reckless Abandon

A fruit tree is a living organism that depends on its environment to grow and bear fruit. If all the factors are just right, the tree will thrive and do what it was created to do. But if the soil is bad, or if there is too much or not enough water and sun, the tree will be stunted and eventually may die.

In Mark 4 (also found in Matthew 13 and Luke 8) Jesus told the story of a farmer who planted seeds in four different types of soil.

Some of the seed fell on the hardened path, and before it could germinate, birds ate it. Some fell on rocky soil, sprang up quickly but eventually withered away because there was not enough good soil for the roots.

The seed that fell among the weeds also germinated and grew, but was choked out by the weeds. But some seed fell on the good soil. It germinated, thrived, and produced an abundant harvest.

Jesus describes the crop like this: “they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold” (Mark 4:8). This is the only parable Jesus tells where, after telling it, the disciples are clearly confused and then Jesus re-tells the story with commentary that explains it!

That alone should indicate to faithful readers of the gospels that this is a key

kingdom story. It is also worthy of note that the sower seems to recklessly sow the seed. He doesn't do "soil tests" to make sure where he is sowing will produce a crop—he sows with abandon.

When placed in a cultural context where seeds were saved from year to year, not purchased at the local farmer's market, that only intensifies the imagery of sowing.

Many scholars would suggest that the parable of the sower is such an important story (indicated by the fact that all three synoptic evangelists record it, its placement in the synoptics, and the amount of space it is given) that unless we understand this story, other kingdom parables will remain difficult to comprehend.

The undeniable reality is that Jesus tells kingdom stories (parables) that are focused on multiplication. Two very similar stories, the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30 and the parable of the pounds in Luke 19:11-27 emphatically teach followers of Jesus that His expectations are that we will "multiply" what He has entrusted to us.

In both stories, there is condemnation for the servant who out of fear and timidity "safely kept" (remember earlier the imagery of seeing the church as a barn in which to safely store fruit) what He entrusted to them.

Jesus is not calling us to play it safe, but to recklessly sow the seed of the good news, knowing that there will be places where it will multiply “thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.” We should not ignore the fact that in the parable of the talents in Matthew, it is immediately followed by the most direct statement about judgment at the end Jesus ever makes.

The line of demarcation between the sheep and the goats in that story is whether or not we fed the hungry, gave water to the thirsty, clothes to the naked, housing to the homeless, visited the prisoners, etc.

Based on placement of these two texts, one must think about the possibility that one of the ways we “sow seeds” is to care for those around us—without regard to what kind of “soil” their hearts may be. This is how Jesus’ command to make disciples (the seed) works.

If all of the right conditions are present, disciples will grow and thrive and ultimately bring an abundant harvest. One little seed can produce a harvest of 100 fold (Mark 4:8). One healthy tree can feed a whole village. One disciple can multiply into tens, hundreds, or even thousands more. This is the mission and vision that Jesus left with His disciples—to go to the ends of the world and make disciples (Acts 1:8).

Jesus is not calling
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hundredfold."

The earliest Christians evidently understood well this imperative from Jesus. When Luke writes the history of the earliest, early Christians in the Book of Acts, he does so in six separate “scenes.” At the end of each scene, he offers a summary statement of what has just been recorded. Read these summary texts in Acts 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; and 28:30, 31.

In them you find vocabulary that speaks to growth! He uses phrases like “continued to grow,” “continued to increase,” “grew and multiplied,” “increasing in number daily,” and “growing mightily.” The last summary, 28:30, 31 has the church’s greatest missionary, Paul, in jail, but sowing seed with abandon.

He was “preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.” Philippians, most likely written from this prison experience, notes that even some of the emperor’s guards had become believers.

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particular His commission to His followers. For example, Matthew 28:18-20 is often referred to as “the great commission” and because of translations challenges, we often assume the command of the commission is “to go.”

In reality, the phrase often translated “Go” is a participle, not an imperative verb and means something like “as you go.” In other words, Jesus assumes that His followers are always “going.”

The verb means to go about, to travel, to journey, to live, etc. It doesn’t typically mean “go and stay” as in move to a new place. Rather the focus is on what could be called “our daily going.” This is the verb we would use to describe “I’m going to work,” or “I’m going out to eat,” or “I’m going to the store.”

We don’t need to be commanded to go—we are always on the go.

The command is that we “make disciples.” Translated with careful attention to Greek grammar, it should read “start making disciples.” In other words Jesus is commanding us to take advantage of our “going” by “discipling” those we encounter in the going about of daily living. The verb means “to be a pupil” with the implication of adherence to the teacher.

Our English phrase “make disciples” might suggest that the command is “make” and the word “disciple” is a noun describing what we

_____ make. But that isn't what the text suggest. It
_____ would be closer to the intent of Jesus' words if
_____ the phrase were translated something like "in
_____ your daily going, disciple others."

_____ That is, to help them become pupils of
_____ Jesus to whom they adhere. We don't "make
_____ disciples." Our task is to attract those we
_____ encounter to the person and work of Jesus.
_____ The other two important words in the text,
_____ "baptizing" and "teaching" are also participles,
_____ not finite verbs.

_____ They describe verbal actions that are
_____ subsequent to our "discipling." They both
_____ describe action that could be described by
_____ the phrase "habit of life." Hopefully what these
_____ new disciples are seeing in our going is that
_____ our goal is to treat others like Jesus treated
_____ those He encountered.

_____ A part of our teaching must be that we
_____ help these new disciples see how to do that
_____ to others they encounter, thus setting up the
_____ context of the multiplication of disciples.



In
your
daily
going,
disciple
others.



Artificial Versus Natural Discipling

This process makes “discipling” more natural than artificial. In some faith contexts, for example, churches will have specific nights where they send out teams “to visit” and “to evangelize.”

That suggests that other than the two or three hours on that specific night, “discipling” is not my concern. But Jesus begs to differ—it is not in “specific time we are sent” that we are called to disciple others, but in our daily, regular going about.

Such an artificial approach to discipling means that every week, some believers (certainly not all!) spend two hours attempting to disciple in an artificial context and the other 166 hours of the week are ignored. Little wonder many churches are storage barns more than anything else.

In Acts 16:11-15, Luke tells the story of the conversion of Lydia in Philippi which illustrates perfectly what is being proposed here. In the story, Paul and his missionary companions arrive in Philippi, apparently a few days before the Sabbath day.

They do a little research (in their “going”) and discover a prayer place near the river. On the Sabbath, they went “outside of the

city walls.” Luke uses emphatic language to emphasize "outside of the city." When they came up on the prayer place, a group of Gentile women who worshipped the God of Israel but had nothing to do with His people, were praying.

They sat down and had a conversation. Again, Luke’s choice of vocabulary is interesting—the verb “began speaking” could mean “had a conversation” and not “gave a sermon/lecture about Jesus.”

In that very place the church at Philippi was born! Very naturally. Not artificially. The challenge for those who desire to be followers of Jesus who disciple non-believers is to learn how to make the most of the opportunities we have been given by God in our daily going (See Ephesians 5:16).

The potential danger here is that we can borrow marketing plans from corporate America and present the gospel in ways that are attractive to some of those we encounter. It is also possible that the marketing tool used may not always be attractive to them.

There is some wisdom in the phrase “What we win them with, we win them to.”

_____ we should intentionally try and connect
_____ with them “on a first name basis.”

_____ The person who checks us out at WalMart
_____ has a first name—do we ever pay attention?
_____ The janitors who come by and empty our
_____ office trash cans have first names—have
_____ we made an effort to learn them? Even the
_____ neighbor across the street, who like us is so
_____ busy that we hardly ever see them except in
_____ passing, has a first name. What if we made
_____ the effort to learn that name?

_____ In many cultural contexts, coffee shops
_____ are frequently found. Sometimes people
_____ actually work from the coffee shop instead
_____ of an office. Isn't this a place where we could
_____ make contacts and get to know people?

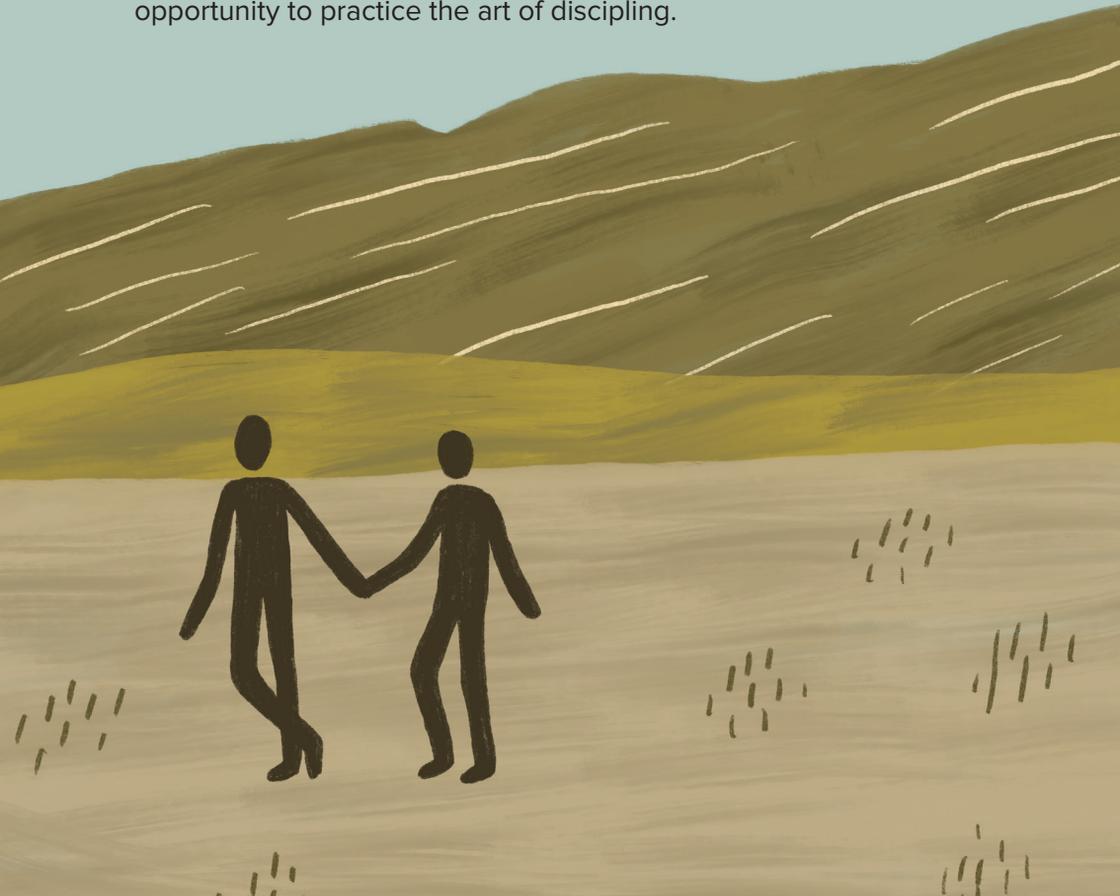
_____ It could be the parents of children who
_____ play on the same recreation league team your
_____ son or daughter plays. Maybe it is the people
_____ you see every day as you use rapid transit to
_____ get to and from your place of employment. If
_____ you are in school, then chances are you sit in
_____ classroom with some of the same people often.

_____ Whatever our neighborhoods, work-
_____ places, and daily “goings” look like in
_____ our personal cultural settings, there are
_____ opportunities for making contacts with
_____ a purpose. The impetus for all Christian
_____ behavior is rooted in loving God and loving
_____ neighbor. Loving neighbor is much bigger
_____ than caring about the person next door.

Organically Discipling

What contacts do you have that you are connected enough that you could say to them, “Come to Jesus, together you and I can fix our lives in ways that honor God?”

The more loving and trusting our relationships become, the more likely we are to enter into communities where we have the opportunity to practice the art of discipling.



Participation Not Creation

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his book *Life Together*, tells us that our job is not so much “to create” but “to participate” in what God is already doing. Clearly small groups, discipleship groups, or whatever other names we use to describe them, are important in the context of the kingdom of God.

After all, Jesus Himself worked with a small group of twelve for three and one-half years! But initially, it might be “good soil” for us to discover communities already in existence.

Remember Paul and his friends in Philippi. They found a group, saw it as an opportunity and took advantage of it. Before we feel compelled to create a group out of nothing, it might be helpful to look at groups that already exist and commit ourselves to modeling Jesus to those in the group.

As communities are discovered that have opportunities for discipling, we also must begin to think about how we can become more intentional either in already existing communities or in helping others from a variety of such communities that see the value of being together as a group interested in the Jesus story and its implications.

One of the dangers here is that what might work in one area or region may not work in another. The task on for one who

wishes to be engaged in discipling is to learn what is effective in the place where God has called you to serve.

This suggests that our approach to community forming needs to be more fluid than fixed. Our goal for such communities can always be the same—we want to help shape communities where people can be disciplined and baptized and taught. But the manner in which we reach those goals will likely be shaped by the cultural context in which we live rather than some rote formula of discipleship group building.

Remember what Jesus said about community? “Where two or more are gathered together in my name, I am there in their midst” (Matthew 18:20). The “two or more” might best be developed by an invitation to a meal and Bible study in your home.

It may be developed by an invitation to get to work an hour early or stay an hour later for a cup of coffee and Bible study. It could be developed in the midst of seeing a need and recruiting a few friends or neighbors to join you in helping meet it.

The real issue is that we pay attention to and care about the people we hang out with and share hobbies and interests with. God has placed people in our lives who need to know Him, and the way they will know Him is through us.

Seeing our neighbor begins with spending time in the presence of God. The important question is, how much time are we spending in the presence of God? As we listen to God, we begin to see people like God sees them.

Our hearts begin to burn with the love of God. Ask God to prepare your own heart and to help you see the open doors and opportunities. As we begin discipling from among our natural contacts and the communities in which we can have influence, we must become more intentional about teaching.

As we saw earlier in this chapter, after discipling we are called “to teach these disciples to observe all things that I have commanded you” according to Jesus.

Notice that Jesus says “all things that I have commanded you.” A newly disciple begins a life-long journey of learning, and that learning must holistically approach the gospel. Good discipling can only happen in the context of holistic Christian lives!

This teaching will encompass the entire nature of what it means to follow Jesus, including praying, reading and studying Scripture, serving others, worship, giving, fasting, and a host of other behavioral patterns that are appropriate for the one who would call himself or herself a disciple.

One of Paul’s favorite words for “teaching/ proclaiming” was the Greek word *parakaleo*.

_____ The noun form of this verb is the name
_____ “Comforter” that Jesus gives the Holy Spirit in
_____ John’s Gospel (14-16). The verb literally means
_____ something like “to call along side of.” It is often
_____ translated (as a verb) in the New Testament as
_____ “exhort” or “beseech” or “urge.”

_____ For example, it is the opening verb in the
_____ often quoted Romans 12:1,2, where we are
_____ “exhorted” to allow God to transform our lives
_____ “by the renewing of our minds.”

_____ The imagery that fits this word may be
_____ something like instead of pointing our fingers
_____ at others we use our hands to beckon them
_____ to come walk alongside of us in this journey
_____ to spiritual maturity. It is a bit like two people
_____ are walking down a path, arms around each
_____ other’s shoulders, determined to help each
_____ other reach a destination.

_____ The kind of teaching that leads to
_____ transformation will almost always fit that
_____ imagery instead of an authoritarian expert
_____ who points his or her finger in our faces to
_____ tells us what to do. In Acts 2:42, we read the
_____ earliest description of the earliest church in
_____ Luke’s story of how twelve frightened, unsure
_____ men managed to step into the streets of
_____ Jerusalem on Pentecost to begin a discipling
_____ project that, within one generation, would
_____ have kingdom outposts all over the Greco-
_____ Roman world!

Instead of
pointing our
fingers at
others we use
our hands to
beckon them
to come walk
alongside of us.

An illustration of a landscape. The top half features a yellow sky with white, wavy lines. Below the sky are several layers of mountains in shades of purple and blue, with white dashed lines indicating texture. The bottom half is a yellow field with a winding white path. Two stylized figures, one dark blue and one purple, are walking on the path. The field is scattered with small, dark blue, tuft-like shapes.

parakaleo

to call along side of

Here's what that text says: "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, and to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers." The definite article "the" appears (in Luke's original text) before each of these four phrases.

No one knows for sure how they arrived at those four ideas as a part of obeying the "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth" idea of Acts 1:8.

What if, however, as the sun is going down on the Day of Pentecost, the twelve slowly drift back to the Upper Room where they like were when the Spirit came earlier that morning. They must have been tired. After all, they had been out in the streets of hostile Jerusalem proclaiming the good news of the gospel, and 3,000 people (likely just counting men) were baptized.

Maybe they were sitting around debriefing what all had happened. Someone might have said, "What's next?" Remember, they've gone from twelve frightened men in hiding to pastors of what we would call a mega-church in a day!

Someone might have said, "Let's do with these people what Jesus did with us." Another one said, "What do you mean?" The reply was, "He taught us, He fellowshiped with us,

_____ He broke bread with us, and He prayed with
_____ us.” And the church’s first goals statement
_____ was born! Training must encompass all of
_____ life, not just our intellect. In the earliest, early
_____ church, that including teaching truth to one
_____ another. This means training must include
_____ Bible study that is faithful to what we know as
_____ “the apostles’ teaching.”

_____ For them, fellowship was far more than
_____ a shared meal occasionally. It was a lifestyle
_____ where believers lived in ways that meant they
_____ took care of each other. In this first scene
_____ of Acts, Luke will twice say “there were no
_____ needy people.”

_____ They broke bread together, which is
_____ Luke’s normal way of describing the Lord’s
_____ Supper, which surely suggests that training
_____ must include worship.

_____ Finally, they prayed together and one
_____ need only to read through Acts and see how
_____ powerful prayer can be. It might be a helpful
_____ exercise to read through anyone of the four
_____ gospels and make a list of texts where Jesus
_____ is teaching, fellowshiping, breaking bread,
_____ and praying with the Twelve. Not to sound too
_____ trite, but it might be fair to say, “If it worked for
_____ Jesus, it could work for us.”

_____ If we read through Acts, we are suddenly
_____ aware of the fact that before Luke finishes his
_____ story—a story which covers roughly the first
_____ 30 years of the existence of the church—we

see “third generation disciples” busy making disciples. Jesus taught the apostles; the apostles taught others; those “others” are to teach still more others.

Paul says to one of his converts, Timothy, that the faith that is in him was taught to him by his grandmother and his mother. He’s a third-generation kind of disciple (2 Timothy 1:5).

It is so obvious that it may not need to be said, but had the apostles not been men committed to discipling, the church would never have gotten off the ground.

Had the disciples they made not committed themselves to discipling, the church would have died an early death. Had Lois and Eunice not taught Timothy—would he have been prepared to serve the kingdom like he did?

Training must encompass all of life, not just our intellect.

At its heart, character is the place where we discover consistency between what we say about Jesus and who we are as His followers. It is that kind of character that will exhibit itself in our good behavior—which will testify to those around us that we actually do believe and do what we are asking them to believe and do.

Through His Holy Spirit and godly human authors, God has graciously given to His people this book we know as the Bible, Scripture. It is in Scripture that we discover who Jesus is and what difference He makes.

That discovery, however, requires some effort on our part and this is no doubt why among Paul’s lists of spiritual gifts we discover gifts like prophecy, teaching, knowledge, and wisdom. Those are the kinds of gifts that equip those committed to discipling to prepare new disciples for kingdom living.

Good teachers will not be content simply to teach new disciples Bible facts. We want these new disciples to learn “to think biblically.” While you can’t be really “thinking biblically” without knowing some “Bible facts,” you can know lots of “Bible facts” and never learn “to think biblically.” Fruitful discipling will require committed men and women who can help others discover how to think biblically.

Fruitful
discipling
will require
committed men
and women who
can help others
discover how to
think biblically.

for evaluation and honest conversation about outcomes. It can be a time to model the importance of fellowship as Luke understands it and prayer as Jesus modeled it with His own disciples.

One of the challenges for both Bible studies where “apostles’ teaching” is in play and in our mentoring relationships which may often be one-on-one, not group oriented is how to create and maintain meaningful conversations to produce good, measurable outcomes.

Think back to our earlier conversation about Philippi and Paul in Acts 16. Luke’s word choice “had a conversation” rather than a more formal “gave a lecture” as the possible meaning for another word, should cause us to stop and think.

How do we start meaningful conversations? We can ask leading questions that we think can start a conversation that will get to where we want to go. For example, if we wanted to teach our group about the joy of being in Christ, we could start with an open-ended question like, “What gives you great joy in life?”



A Day in the Life of Jesus



In His going about, Jesus was teaching in their synagogues, heralding the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sicknesses and diseases. Clearly His “going” is intentional in terms of ministry and discipling. It was in doing these activities that Jesus encountered crowds, crowds that were troubled in significant ways. Matthew describes them as “sheep without a shepherd.”

Rather than being disgusted with the crowds, afraid of the crowds, or even choosing to ignore the crowd, He had compassion on the crowd and saw it as a “plentiful harvest.” It was only then that Jesus tells us “pray to the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth workers into His harvest.”

If we take the three phrases—teaching in synagogues, heralding the gospel, and healing sicknesses and diseases—and find places in the gospels where Jesus is doing those things, we quickly discover that His approach to discipling was intense.

Often, when He taught in the synagogue, His life was threatened. (Read Luke 4:16-30, especially the verses 28-30.) When He heralded the good news of the kingdom (Read Luke 7:36-50), the very religious people of the day were irate.

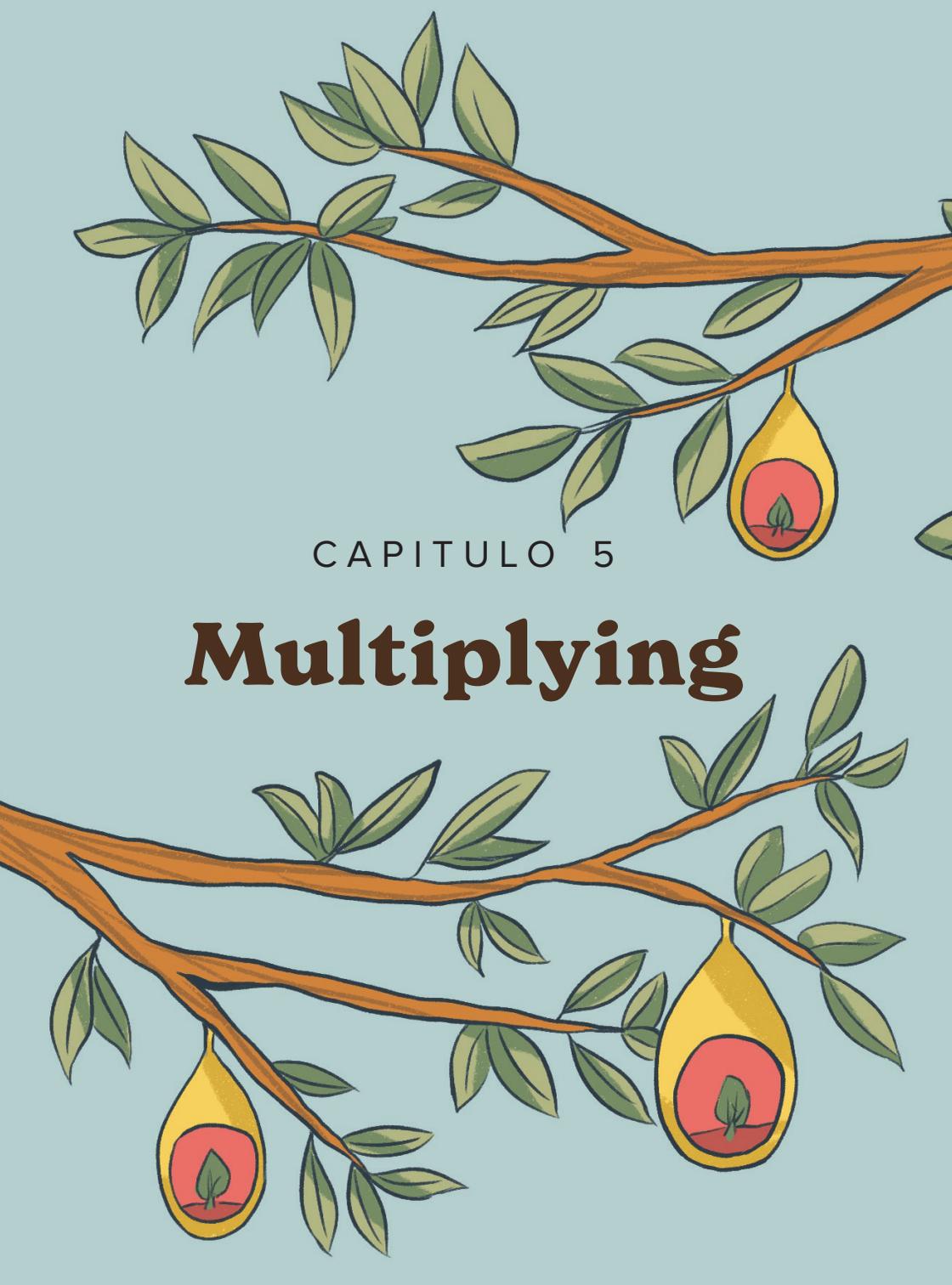
Even when He healed, we often discover religious leaders ready to destroy him. (Read Matthew 12:9-14.) “Imitating Jesus” doesn’t

_____ mean we try and literally mimic His activities,
_____ but that we discover how those specific kinds
_____ of behaviors can express themselves in our
_____ own cultural settings. It seems that Jesus was
_____ engaged in His world, aware of its needs, and
_____ willing to take risks to meet those needs. That
_____ is organic discipling at its best!

_____ Notice how Matthew talks about “a day
_____ in the life of Jesus.” We learn what Jesus
_____ did, what Jesus saw, what Jesus felt, and
_____ then what Jesus said. We learn that process
_____ in the context of engagement, awareness,
_____ and risk taking.

_____ What if we became so engaged in our
_____ cultural settings that we became intimately
_____ aware of its needs and were willing to take
_____ serious risks to meet those needs? If we did,
_____ we would be doing what Jesus did, seeing
_____ what Jesus saw, feeling what Jesus felt, and
_____ then discover, as we prayed to the Lord of
_____ the Harvest, we become answers to our
_____ own prayers.

To do what
Jesus did, feel
what Jesus felt,
and see what
Jesus saw.



CAPITULO 5

Multiplying



The teachings of Jesus often use agricultural imagery to speak about the idea of the growth of the Kingdom of God and disciples attempt to bring heaven to earth. In the previous chapter, for example we gave attention to the Parable of the Sower, a story found in all three Synoptic Gospels. What should be remembered from that story is not just the fact that the seed that fell on good soil was extraordinarily productive, but also that the seed that fell on the path, among the rocks, and among the thorns produced no harvest. Every person who has ever attempted to farm, or even grow a backyard garden knows that life in the world of agriculture is challenging.

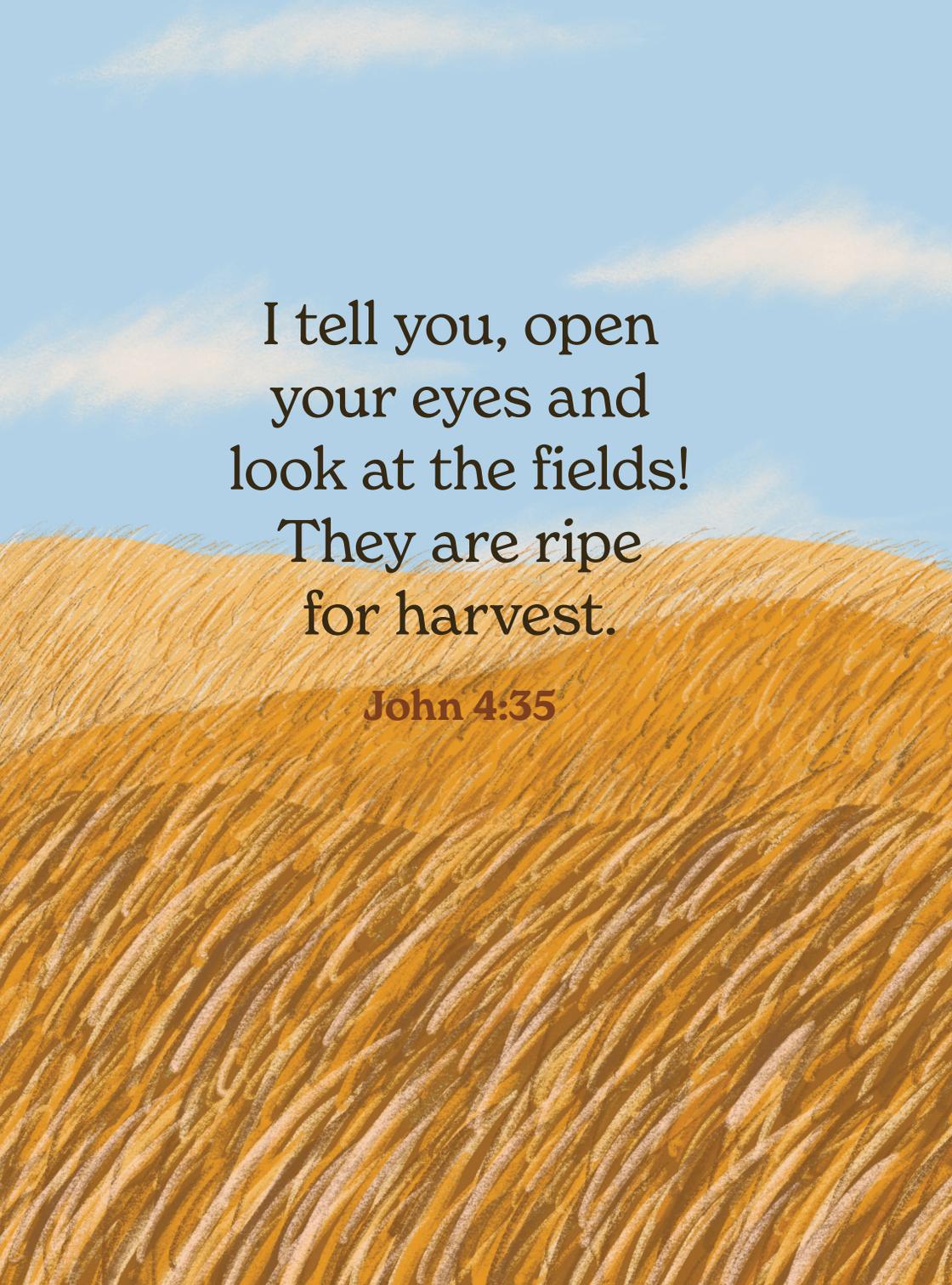
Discipleship is not about adding one or two people every year to our church's membership roll. No, our mission is to win the world for Christ! We plant the seeds of the gospel so that we see an abundant harvest that produces so many seeds for the following year that can be planted in new fields.

Every friend we have as a contact is a potential harvest of many seeds because that friend will have many other friends and contacts. Jesus said, "I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest" (John 4:35).

The reminder through the imagery of agriculture that the kingdom of God is all about growth can be a powerful motivator to take discipling more seriously than we might otherwise. But at the same time, we cannot forget that farming is not a guarantee.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the great German pastor and theologian of the period in and around the Second World War wrote an amazing, albeit challenging, book titled *The Cost of Discipleship*. The theme of Bonhoeffer's work is that following Jesus is a costly exercise of faith, and before embarking on the journey, one should count that cost.

Not unlike the two brief parables Jesus tells in Luke 14:28-33 where Jesus notes that a person building a tower should know what it

A field of golden wheat under a blue sky with light clouds. The wheat is in the foreground, and the sky is in the background.

I tell you, open
your eyes and
look at the fields!

They are ripe
for harvest.

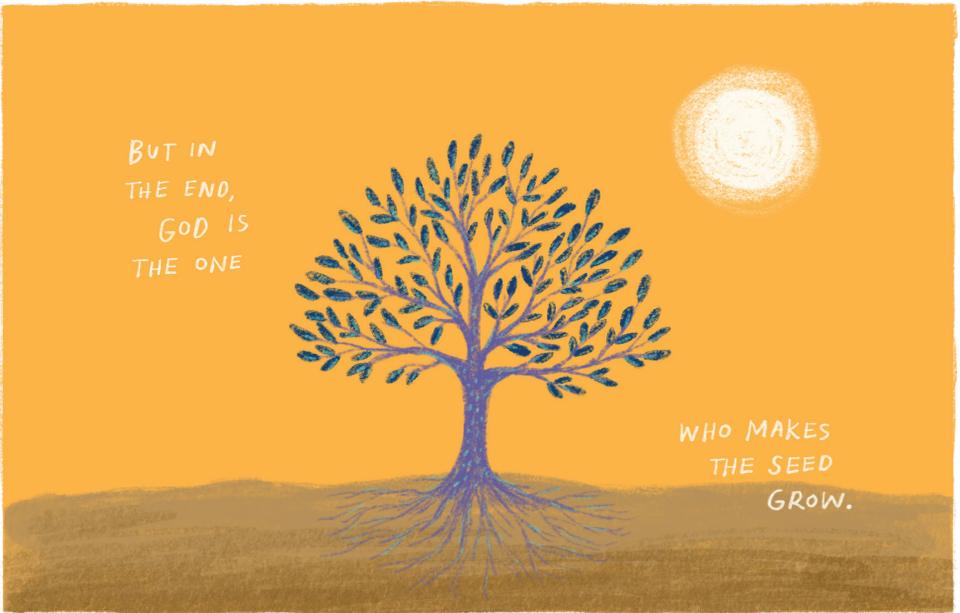
John 4:35

This does not mean that the work of the first generation was a failure, in fact it was the opposite, the second generation was able to learn where the good soil was from the first. It would also seem, like in the Parable of the Tares that enemies were throwing weeds among the good seeds.

Because we too often have adapted ways of measuring from the kingdom of the world and not the kingdom of God, we often expect that the response to discipling efforts will be the same everywhere.

In the end, that attitude drives many who would serve Christ in discipling to see themselves as failure and of no value to the Kingdom. In 2 Timothy 2:15, Paul, speaking to a young man working to disciple non-believers, says: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”

If you grew up on the King James Version of the New Testament, you might remember that as “Study to shew thyself ... ” The actual word Paul uses, translated “be diligent” in the NASB and many other modern translations, means something like “do your best.” Paraphrased, it might read, “Spare no effort to show yourself ... ”





A CLOSER LOOK

*How do we
apply this?*

Denis has spent his time trying to convince his bowling league to attend church using a direct method, where he talks about how life changing Jesus has been and that they should want their lives to be changed at church too! Some members of the bowling group are uninterested, having had negative experiences at churches in the past. How can Denis reach them? He decides to invite them to a post-bowling cool off session where they can sit, talk, and enjoy some snacks at his home. Here he can casually bring up ways that his life is different from the times before becoming connected to God.

Throw Your Net to the Other Side

For this type of abundant harvest to happen, we may need to change our thinking and methods. This is the last chapter so surely a few more agricultural metaphors can't hurt. If you wanted to grow bananas, and were looking for the best possible place to grow them, you might pick India, Brazil, or Ecuador.

If you were not used to the tropics and instead decided to try to grow your bananas in Finland, then your banana crop would freeze and die at the first hint of winter. No farmer would be foolish enough to try such a thing, so then why do we do this with our churches?

Different seeds in different places, require different types of nurturing. A banana cannot grow in the tundra of northern Europe, nor would we expect a Finnish Pine to survive in the Arabian desert. Yet when it comes to churches, there is a desire to copy what is successful in one place and simply transplant to a totally different setting/culture/people and expect it to work just the same.

In John 21 Peter announced to six of Jesus' disciples that he was "going fishing" and invited them to come along. They go to the Sea of Galilee and fish all night, not catching a single fish! Maybe Jesus is sending Peter a message about his plans. As they approach the shore that morning,



_____ Jesus (though they don't recognize Him)
_____ asks, "Children, you do not have any fish,
_____ do you?" He already has the charcoal fire
_____ burning to grill the fish for breakfast.

_____ He tells them, "Throw the net on the
_____ other side." They obey this stranger and
_____ ended up with a catch they could barely get
_____ back to shore. Finally Peter recognizes that
_____ it is Jesus and he rushes to the shore. The
_____ other disciple drag the net to shore. There
_____ were 153 fish.

_____ No matter how hard we work, no matter
_____ how much effort we put in and no matter
_____ how amazing the smoke machine we add to
_____ our worship team, that will not provide the
_____ increase. The farmer may tend to their crops
_____ day and night, they may water it daily, cover it
_____ from snow, give it fertilizer and nutrients, but it
_____ still does not grow. In the end the farmer only
_____ controls what they do, they cannot control
_____ what the plant does try as they might.

_____ Every farmer knows that eventually you
_____ get to the point where you must give up control
_____ and simply hope. In John 21 Peter is working
_____ his hardest to catch fish, in spite of his efforts
_____ all night long he catches nothing, even though
_____ he is a professional fisherman by trade! It is
_____ only when he gives up the catch to Jesus that
_____ suddenly the nets are overflowing with fish!

_____ Let's combine these three ideas. There is
_____ a dispute going on in the Church of Corinth

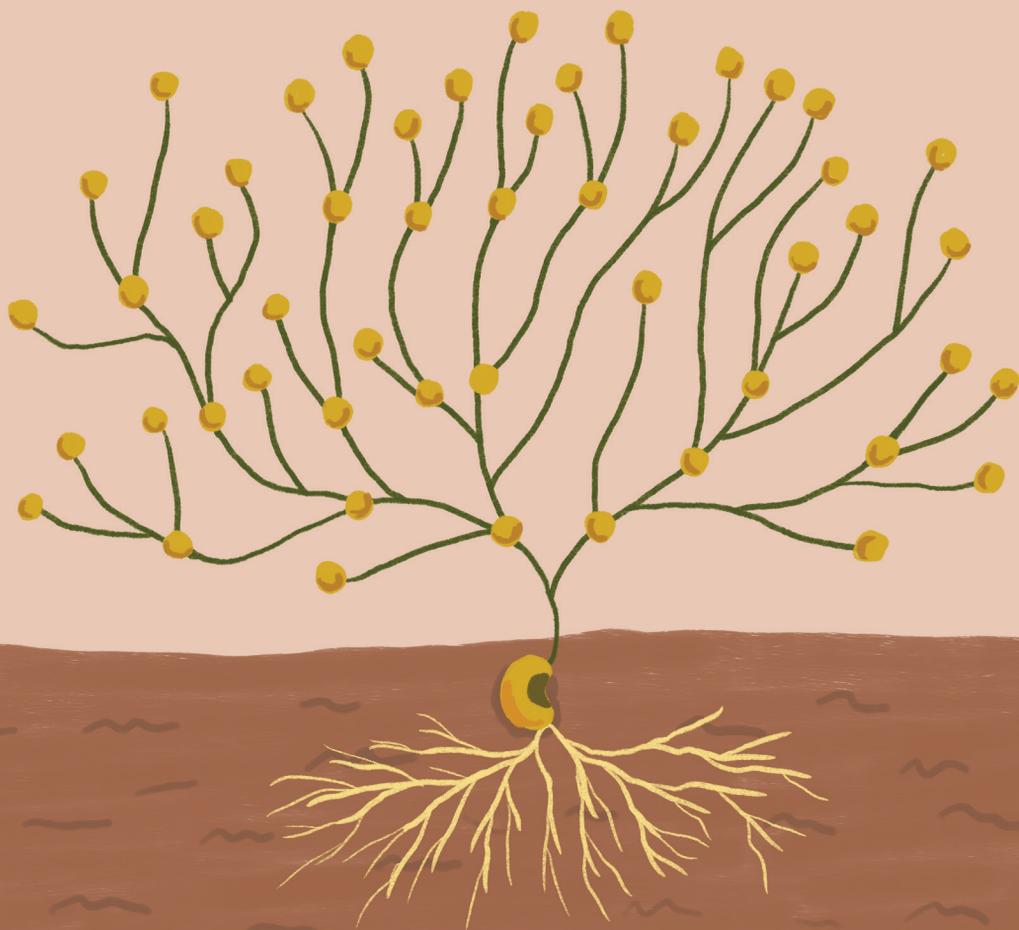
between people who agree with Paul and people who agree with Apollos, but Paul wants to shift their perspective away from them when he says this in 1 Corinthians 3:6-9, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now the one who plants and the one who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building.”

It is our duty to plant and to water, the one who plants may never see the crop that ends up growing, perhaps they planted a seed with a single individual in a town that is far away and they never hear from them again.

The one who waters may mentor the one with this seed for many years and feel as though they have made no progress and in spite of their efforts, yet from them God may be working to germinate inside them a mission that will explode into their community in a way that neither the planter nor the waterer saw coming or even understands.

Yet if either had attempted to control the growth themselves then perhaps it would have never happened, but if they allow God to be the one to direct the potential then there are no bounds to these seeds reach.

Let Go and Go



Here we have run into difficulty in the church. In our desire to maintain control over the growth so that it is done ‘correctly’ we export our own methods into the discipleship process, and nowhere is this greater felt than in churches.

Interestingly, in writing Acts, Luke shows no interest in some sort of monolithic structure that every local church Paul helps plant must follow. While much of the Western world seems fixated on such matters, most of the rest of the world seems more like Luke—disinterested in such matters.

Denominations can be helpful in strategy, cooperation, theological orthodoxy, and pooling resources. However, there is always the danger of allowing bureaucratic structures to determine mission rather than allowing people actually doing the work of discipling to determine best practices. Structures developed by those “from afar” may sometimes try to control the mission rather than to resource the mission.

It may be helpful to think that every time an unbeliever decides to follow Jesus, he or she is planting a flag on behalf of the Kingdom of God, claiming new territory. Around that imaginary flag, believers can meet in the name of Jesus in commitment to the apostles’ teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer (Acts 2:42). We may be surrounded by

unbelievers on all sides, but through faith in Jesus, we have claimed territory for the King of the Kingdom, Jesus the Messiah.

This is why the term “kingdom outpost” can be a valid description of what the church is and it is from that kingdom outpost that we continue to engage the culture around us seeking contacts from which we can help form communities who will also “plant a flag on behalf of the Kingdom.” This is where the relationship between institutions and movements can become important.

By nature, institutions are more bureaucratic than they need be and are often slow to act. They can become so focused on structure that they overlook mission. Movements, on the other hand, are often free to react in the moment, have little structure, and often advance kingdom values, including discipleship, in much more fruitful ways.

The danger, however, is that because they so often are very free and without structure, movements can get off track from what the gospel really is. Institutions can help movements avoid that stumbling block.

So the issue, as we so often see, that we must choose either institutions or movements, but that both can help facilitate the growth of the kingdom of God through ministry like discipling.

If what we have been thinking about organic discipling is truly biblical, and that it can be done by anyone anywhere, the movement issue won't likely be structure and resources. Those are issues for the institutions to wrestle with.

The institution's primary function, especially in terms of discipling ministries happening in other places, is to assist the movement leaders in finding culturally appropriate and theologically sound approaches to discipling in various cultures.



A CLOSER LOOK

*How do we
apply this?*

Denis wants his informal gathering to pick up steam and start bringing his bowling friends to church! However, he still hasn't had any success on that front. Instead some talk about maybe inviting some non-bowling friends of theirs to this hangout. Denis initially finds himself wanting to refuse, these are the people he is trying to get to church, more will just make this harder. Instead he takes a step back to allow God to speak to him, and in the end says that they would be welcome. Initially this is a pretty nerve wracking decision with strangers in his home.

Slowly the topic of God begins to insert itself more and more in the conversation, between talks of bowling strategy and commentary on basketball games. The first few steps of discipleship have begun. Denis goes to his pastor often for resources when the talk gets more serious, now instead of trying to get a few of them to church, Denis has the first seed of a new church planted!





wherever
He leads ...

Appendix

STEPS AND TOOLS

Our purpose is to intentionally and creatively put the needs of another ahead of our own needs and allow the gift of Christ to spill out of us with gentleness, respect, and humility.

STEPS

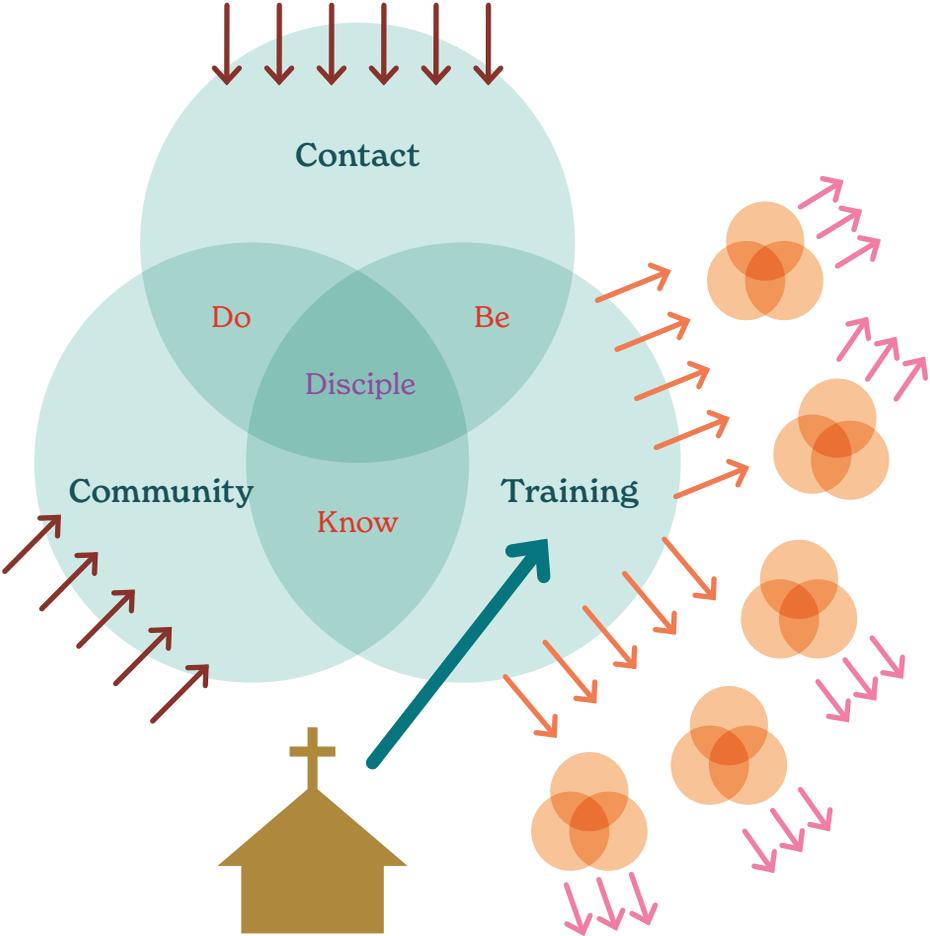
TO CHANGE THE WORLD

HOW TO REFOCUS YOUR LIFE

FAITH: The knowledge of God put into action.

1 Listen (Prayer)

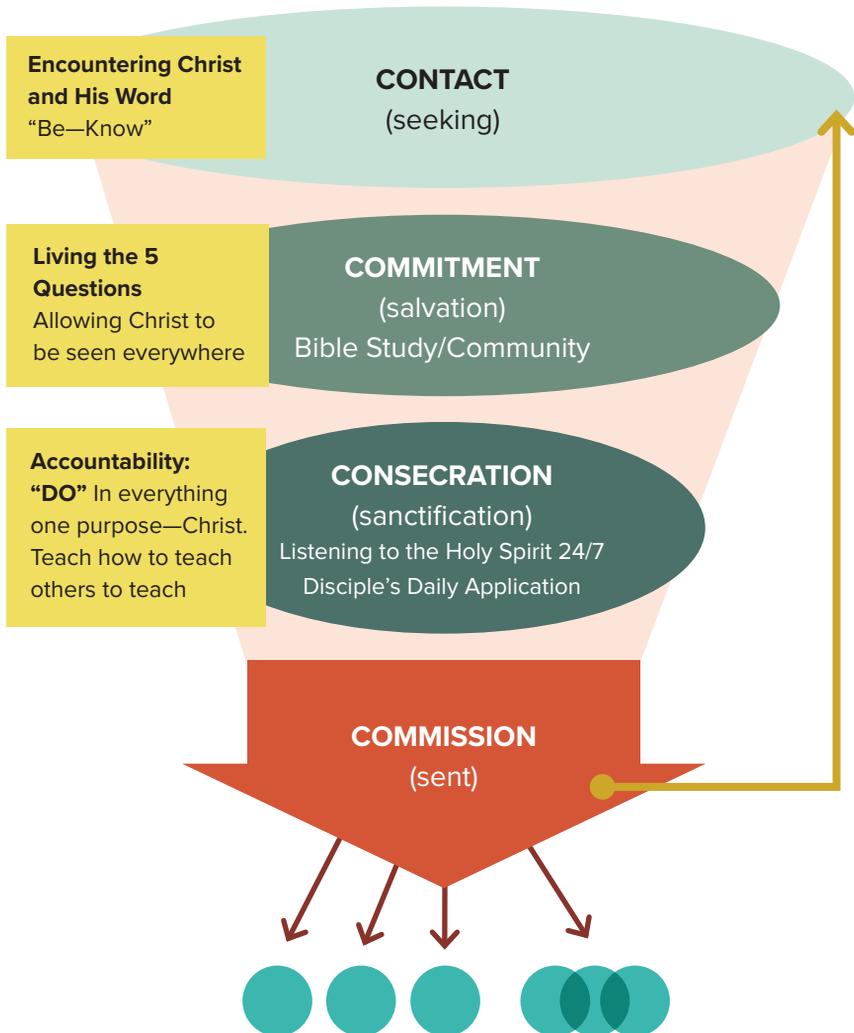
2 Act



Everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Romans 14:23

There are only two possible explanations for an individual or group that does not make disciples: ignorance or sin.



1

You Do It

1. Practice the Five Questions every day.
Set your watch to remind you:
 - Every hour, “What am I doing here and what is in my hand?”
 - Every 30 minutes “Who is in front of me?” and “Don’t you know you are the dwelling place of God?”
 - Every occupation/encounter is an excuse God uses to reach humanity.
2. Keep a prayer (listening) journal. “What if everyone made disciples like me?”
3. From the journal, carefully plan your day. Listen for what God wants to say to your contacts. Every location, every moment, every person: LISTEN.
4. List healing needs. Everyone needs the healing touch of God.
5. Create a team with at least 1 partner, but no more than 12.

2

Create a Contact Group

Focus: Non-believers to Encounter Christ in You.

Wherever you are, create a fun group: hobby, neighborhood, or work. Be so different that people ask, “Why are you so kind?” Then when the Spirit prompts you, invite them to your community group.

1. Listen, share, listen, love, listen, listen, listen ...
2. Build relationships.
3. Find a point of common interest.
4. Coffee, sports, lunch, community projects, tutoring, music ...
5. Connect the families.
6. Offer to serve/ask them to help you.
7. Create an atmosphere that encourages questions.
8. When asked, identify yourself as a follower of Jesus rather than a Christian.

9. Love—is a decision of your will to put the needs of another ahead of your own (primary guide).
10. Have them teach you about their culture, customs, practices, beliefs, language. Then respect them.
11. Wait for them to ask you questions.
12. Answer from Scripture.
13. Answer with a question.
14. Be intentional, but don't be in a hurry. Build the relationship.
15. NEVER! NEVER! NEVER try to win an argument.
16. Seek, find, and build bridges.
17. Become involved—family, community, etc.
18. Be honest.
19. Know the Word (as the very breath of God).
20. Focus on Jesus.
21. Be gentle, humble, and respectful.
22. Don't confuse your culture with following Jesus.
23. It is not your job to convert anyone. You are to be the platform the Holy Spirit uses to enter their life.
24. Be ready for the moment.
25. Be ready for lifelong contextual discipleship, coaching, and mentoring.

**“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment and the second is like it:
Love your neighbor as yourself.”**

Matthew 22:37-39

Every Breath...

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Therefore:

1 Go

2 Make

disciples of all nations

3 Baptizing

them in the name ...

4 Teaching

them to obey everything I commanded you, and lo,

I am with you always
even to the very end of the age

Matthew 28:18-20

THE GOAL: UNCEASING AWARENESS

3

Create a Community Group

FOCUS: Salvation and First Steps to Following Jesus.

This is where the pre-believer encounters the Word. There may also be nominal Christians and brand-new Christians with limited knowledge of Scripture. One-on-one or more, but no more than 12. If more than 12 start a second group.

1. 50/50 Principle: No more than half of this group should be Christians. When they become Christians immediately move them to a Training group and guide them to begin their own contact/community groups.
2. Start Small - Go Deep.
3. Primary purpose: Hear God and take action.

4. Take turns asking leading questions and leading discussion.
5. Applications ... always make it fun.
6. Guide don't lead.
7. Don't tell them, have them tell you. Then ask why?
8. Real-life applications taken from the life and parables of Christ.
9. Start with one of the gospels.
10. Strong focus on the Sermon on the Mount. "This is how a follower of Christ always lives in every circumstance."
11. Use the Scripture, Fasting, Prayer tools (See Tools).
12. Meet every week.
13. Show them, don't just tell them.
14. Report where you see God at work.
15. Safe place for doubts: "What do you mean Jesus is the only way? How can I know it is true? Why do Christians ... ?"
16. Away from evil—"me first" and toward love—"you first." God is love.
17. Immerse into My "Eis" essence: "*Baptizing them in the "Eis" name.*"
18. Teaching to obey everything.
19. The Word—Listen—The Word—Listen systematically and consistently.
20. Show them ministry. Listen for their call and results of their ministry.
21. Watch, listen, and review.
22. Find out if the disciples know what Jesus has commanded.
23. Find out if the disciples are actually obeying Jesus.
24. Go. Make. Immerse. Teach.
25. "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" Galatians 5:6.

YOU DO IT

1 Have them watch.

2 Have them do it with you.

3 They do it, you watch.

4 They do it.

Being a disciple means deliberately identifying yourself with God's interest in other people.

Richard Foster

4

Training Groups

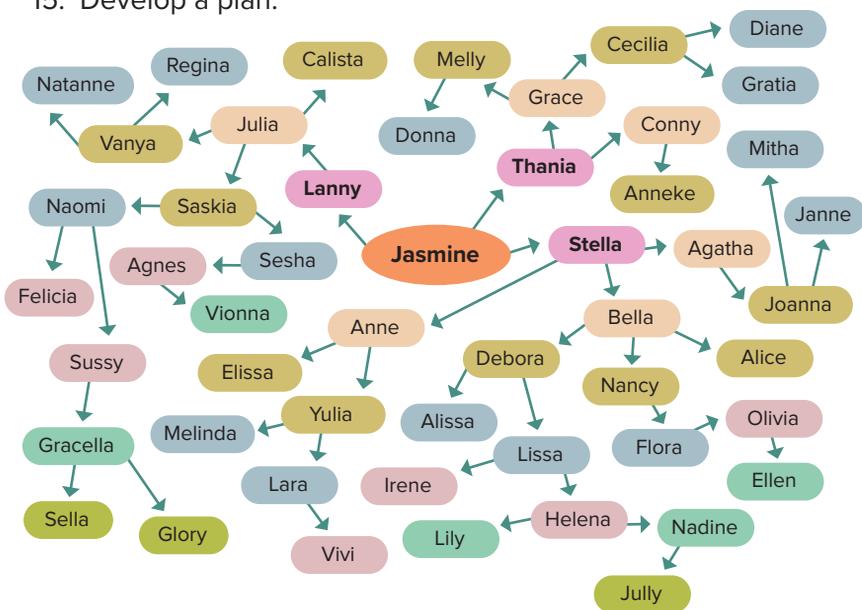
MOVING FROM BELIEVER TO DISCIPLE

**Focus: Sanctification.
Holiness as a lifestyle, every
step we take is holy ground.**

If you say you are a disciple ... prove it. This is for all believers, from brand new to been in church for a long time.

1. Meet weekly (for a maximum of 2 hours) with a mentor/coach and others in the training group.
2. How are you going to teach them how to teach others to make disciples?
3. 3rd Generation: You cannot say you've made a disciple until that disciple has taught someone else how to make disciples. How can I model and teach my disciple to find/model/teach a disciple the skills find/model/teach disciples?
4. Show and tell model: Go out in the community and show them how to form contact and community groups.
5. Make sure they can teach how to pray, fast, and study the Scripture.

6. Teams can be no longer than 3 couples.
7. Each member should find a contact group within 2 weeks of joining the training group.
8. Teach in Community Bible Study groups.
9. When they have a contact that is interested, begin their own new Community Bible Study (should be within 6 months). Drop out of the old community Bible study group they were a member of but remain in the training group.
10. Team teach and train contact groups.
11. You have been given 168 hours each week by God. How are you spending His time?
12. Be accountable for your focus.
13. See Tools: Questions to ask every disciple, Training Session Templet, How to teach others to teach: Scripture, Prayer, Fasting, Live.
14. Create multiple applications for each week and then report.
15. Develop a plan.



TOOLS

I

Training Session Templet for First Sessions

THE ONLY THING THAT COUNTS IS FAITH
EXPRESSING ITSELF THROUGH LOVE.”

GALATIANS 5:6

1

Accountability

“...THEY REPORTED TO JESUS WHAT
THEY HAD DONE.” *LUKE 9:10*

Love

Disciples are accountable for the love God has entrusted to them. Love is a decision of the will to put the needs of another ahead of my own.

1

Acknowledging God’s Presence through public prayer and expression.

This week ...

- a. Where have I seen God at work this week?
- b. What is God talking to me about? (What has been my response?)
- c. What am I focused on?

2 Confession

This week...

- a. Have you deliberately disobeyed God?
- b. What temptations have you encountered?
- c. What have you done that you wish to keep secret?
- d. How have you spent God's time and God's money?
- e. Who has God made you responsible for this week?
- f. Where/when/ how did joy and love flow from you?
- g. I focused on God ___ hours and ___ minutes this week.
- h. Describe your time with God.

3 Observations and Reflections

This week...

- a. What have I learned from God? (my response?)
- b. What am I reading? (Scripture and other writers)
- c. I am praying for the following three times a day.
 - Group Member:
 - 3/6 pre-believers/believers:
- d. During my time with God, I am praying for other family, friends, and events.
- e. My time alone with God resulted in:_____.
- f. Last week I learned and put into action:_____.
- g. The 7 individuals whose needs I intentionally put ahead of my own. (Results)
- h. Unexpected opportunities (missed or discovered) to put others' needs ahead of my own last week.

2

Receiving Knowledge

“... DO NOT MERELY LISTEN TO THE WORD.
DO WHAT IT SAYS.” *JAMES 1:22*

Faith

Disciples are accountable for the faith God has entrusted to them. Faith is the knowledge of God put into action.

This week ...

- a. Scripture Study: i.e. **1 John**
- b. Topic: **Scripture Study Methods**
- c. Dialogue and Apologetic
- d. Texts: **My Utmost for His Highest, Oswald Chambers;**
Celebration of Discipline, Richard Foster

What have I learned about God?

What have I learned about humankind?

What have I learned about myself?

3

Ministry Put Into Action

“THE LORD APPOINTED... OTHERS AND SENT THEM TWO BY TWO AHEAD OF HIM TO EVERY TOWN AND PLACE WHERE HE WAS ABOUT TO GO” *LUKE 10:1*

1 Lord, what do you want to do in me and through me this week?

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1. Wake Up at _____ "I will serve"	1.	1.	1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.	4.	4.	4.

2 My priorities this week ...

3 How will I serve this week?

- a. In Love b. In Truth c. In Unity

4 My assignment this week from ...

- a. God b. Myself c. The group d. Others

5 What/Whose needs will I encounter?

6 How am I prepared?

7 Ask one another: What were you and God doing at ...
2pm Tues, or 5pm Thurs or 10am Sat ... etc.

We must place
ourselves
before God so
that He can
transform us.

II

Praying (Listening) Journal

This is one of the most important tools to make disciples as you are going. It allows an individual to hear and see God throughout the day, enabling every step to be holy, to truly “pray without ceasing.” In the evening, the disciple considers the next day. Where he will be every hour and at least one person he expects to see. He writes this in the “day planner” and listens for God’s guidance regarding what he should say and do during the encounter. At the end of the next day, he writes down the result and begins the process for the following day. This should be done every day of the week. This is simply the strongest and quickest way to refocus our attention from ourselves to hearing God’s voice continually, allowing us to walk in the beauty of holiness and those around us to encounter Christ. This can also be incorporated into a training group’s shared app so that the team can pray for one another and be accountable.

Prayerfully, Plan Each Day of Your Life

Monday				
When	Who	Where	What	Result
08:00				
09:00				
10:00				
11:00				
12:00				
13:00				
14:00				
15:00				
16:00				
17:00				
18:00				
19:00				
20:00				

Sample Day Planner

**Faith is the knowledge of
God put into action.**

“Without faith
it is impossible
to please God.”

III

Sample Questions

TO ASK ONE ANOTHER
TO REFOCUS FROM
BELIEVER TO DISCIPLE.

A

How do they live?

1. As the dwelling place of God, how will they respond to the individuals the Holy Spirit brings into His presence?
2. What is their primary purpose at their current employment?
3. How do they spend 24 hours on a typical Tuesday?
4. What is their most important possession?
5. What has been their greatest challenge in life?
6. If they were given \$25,000, how would they spend it?
7. How much time do they spend alone with God in a week?
8. What are the clerks' names at the store where they purchase food?
9. What gives them the greatest joy?
10. What is the kindest deed they've ever done for a complete stranger?
11. If they had to choose between the two terms, would they describe themselves as leaders or servants?
12. Name five ways they put someone else's needs ahead of their own need in the past week.
13. What does their dream home look like?
14. Outside the Bible, list 5 individuals they admire the most.
15. How much time do they spend with their mentor?
16. List the names of the 5 neighbors closest to their apartment?
17. How often have they given something away?
18. Who are their 3 living heroes?
19. What makes them angry?
20. How would they respond to someone who said the Bible is not God's word but man's ideas about God?

21. If they had a whole day with nothing to do, how would they spend it?
22. How do they serve others?
23. To whom are they accountable?
24. Since you are the Ark of the New Covenant, how do you let God out of the box?

B

How do they commune with God?

1. Having been in the presence of God in prayer, study, fasting, and devotions, how have they changed?
2. What are you and God talking about?
3. Where do you and God meet?
4. How often and where do you see God?
5. Tell me about the structure of your conversation with God.
6. What do you daydream about?
7. What does God think about you?
8. List six books that have impacted your life.
9. How have you responded to God's command, "Be holy"?
10. What does communion mean to you?
11. How and when do you hear God?
12. How often do you take an entire day alone with God?
13. What role does Scripture play in your life?
14. What does God personally tell you about your friend?
15. How does God view your co-worker?
16. What books are you reading?
17. When and why do you fast?

18. What do you and God talk about when He brings up your neighbor?
19. Give an example of how you love God.
20. What is sin?
21. Why and how do you study Scripture?
22. How do you worship?
23. Where/when/how have you heard God the clearest in your life, this year, this month, this week ... today?



How will they disciple others?

1. What elements do they consider the most important in learning to make disciples?
2. List those God has given them to disciple.
3. Give an example of how they have guided an individual to meet Christ.
4. What has been their most rewarding discipleship experience?
5. How much time do they spend with those individuals God has given them?
6. Where did they meet those individuals they are discipling?
7. What practical application elements are involved in their discipleship group?
8. Outline six weeks of discipleship meetings.
9. What goals do they have for each disciple?

10. Tell me how they guide an individual who has just begun to follow Jesus into a life of joyful complete surrender to the Holy Spirit.
11. How do these disciples practice holiness in their daily lives?
12. What has been their most disappointing discipleship experience?
13. Who is discipling/mentoring/coaching them?
14. How many of the individuals they have disciplined are currently discipling others?
15. What does a typical meeting with the disciples involve?
16. Is there a place for confession in the discipleship group?
17. What steps do they take to disciple non-believers?
18. Since they are called to equip followers of Jesus to become ministers, what tools do they need?
19. How do they explain that the Bible is different than texts held sacred in other religions?
20. What methods are they using to disciple their family?
21. What Bible study methods have they taught others?
22. What will they do: study, applications, accountability, mentor, multiply?

**God's life in us expresses itself
as God's life, not as human life
trying to be godly.**

Oswald Chambers

If you don't live this way, no one around you (co-workers, friends, family, waitress, clerk) will see the Lord, they will only see you.

“Pursue peace with all men and holiness without which no one will see the Lord.”

Hebrews 12:14

“As He who has called you is holy, you also must be holy in all of your actions, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy for I am holy.’”

1 Peter 1:15

The habit of discipleship allows the indwelling Holy Spirit to permeate our being with abiding peace, penetrated our lives throughout with love, produce a faith that sees everything in the light of God's purpose which calls us to participate in the reconciliation of lost humankind, enables hopefulness that stands firm in the most discouraging of circumstances, empower us to do what is right and withstand the forces of evil. In short, it is exactly that joyful abundance of life Jesus said He came to bring all who follow Him.

Richard Foster

IV

Teach How to Teach

1. GUIDE DON'T LEAD!
2. UNLESS YOU ARE MODELING
SOMETHING NEW ALWAYS
HAVE THE DISCIPLES LEAD THE
SCRIPTURE LESSON. THIS CAN
BE DONE AS A TEAM OR AS AN
INDIVIDUAL.
3. DON'T TELL THEM ... HAVE THEM
TELL YOU, THEN ASK WHY.

1

Scripture

THEY WILL NEED TO LEARN SEVERAL METHODS TO TEACH OTHERS HOW TO TEACH SCRIPTURE. WE'VE LISTED A FEW BELOW. MAKE SURE YOU OBSERVE THEM USING ALL OF THE METHODS. TALK ABOUT WHICH ONES WORK BEST IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS.

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17

1

Overview Approach

a. Summarize

The narrative; making sense of the passage.

b. Understand

What does this mean? Why would God choose this story and these words/tense/phrase/person/story/theme? What is the purpose?

c. Application

How does this change me? In light of this Scripture, how shall I live?

2

Word by Word

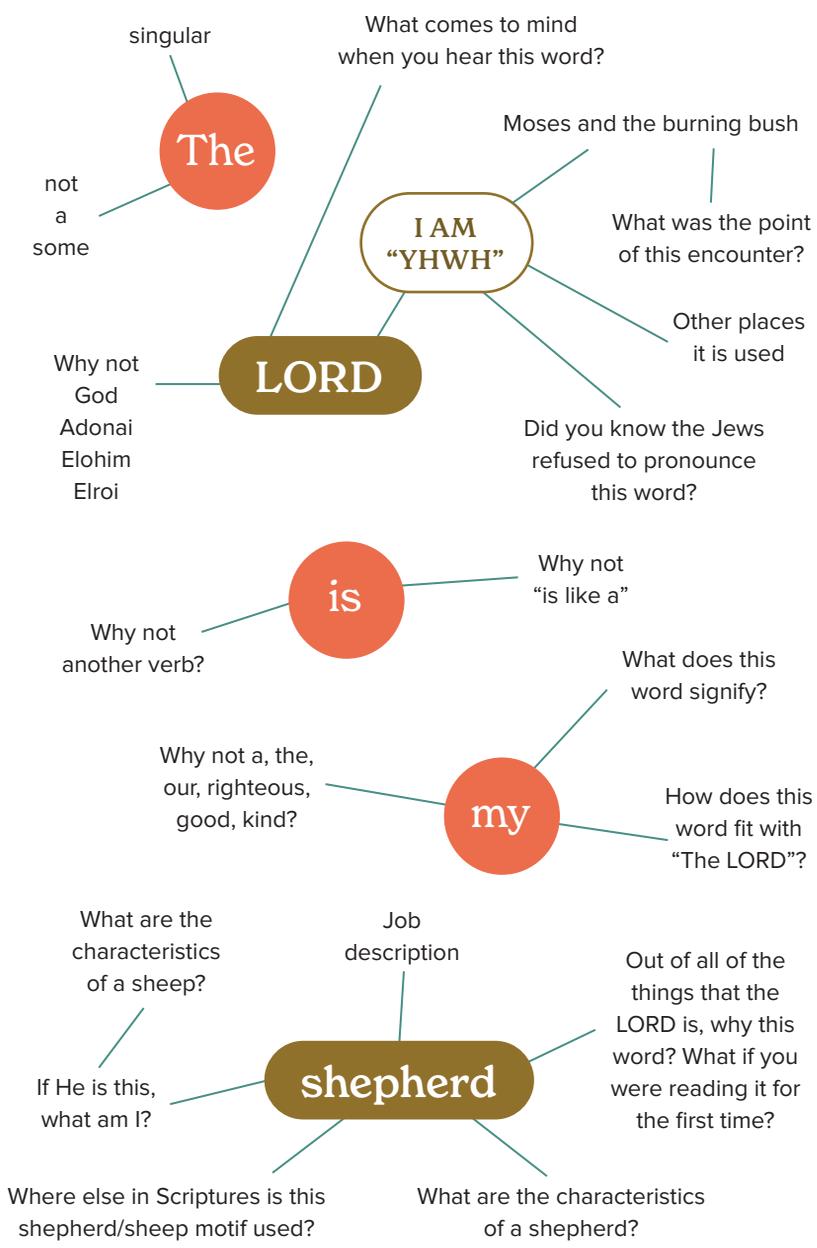
“All Scripture is God breathed.”

- What does this word/tense/phrase/person/theme mean?
- Why is this word chosen and why is it placed here?
- What other word could have been chosen?
- What does this (or the negative) imply?
- Where else in Scripture are these words found?

EXAMPLE: Psalm 23

Have the disciples do the entire chapter simply asking questions about each word.

- The: _____
- LORD: _____
- is: _____
- my: _____
- shepherd: _____



3

Verb Study

EXAMPLE: *Psal/m 23*

God's Action

- He is
- He makes
- He leads
- He restores
- He guides
- You are with me
- Your rod/staff comfort
- You prepare
- You anoint

Man's Action

- I walk
- I will not want/fear
- I dwell

4

Phrase Study

EXAMPLE: "Come unto me" in the Gospel of Matthew

- 5:24 – First Go and be reconciled then **come** ...
- 8:11 – Many will **come** from the east and the west and take their places with Abraham.
- 11:28 – **Come** to me all of you who are weary and burdened.
- 14:28 – Lord ... tell me to **come** to you on the water. Jesus said, "**Come**."
- 16:24 – If any one would **come** after me he must: deny ..., take ..., follow...
- 19:14 – Let the little children **come** ... because ...
- 19: 21 – If you want "telos": go ... sell ... give ... then **come** ... follow.
- 25:34 – **Come**, you who are blessed ...

5

Theme Study

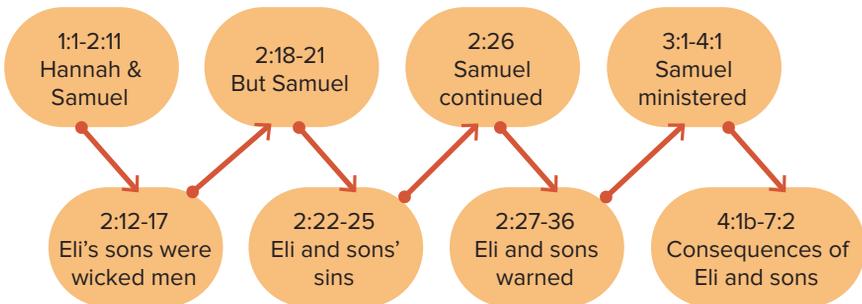
EXAMPLE: Authority of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew

- Chapters 5, 6, and 7 – Teaching: Over man’s conduct & O.T. Law
- Chapter 8
 - Over sickness
 - Worst kind 1-4 (touches and speaks)
 - Gentiles and distance 5-13 (speaks)
 - Common and uncommon 14-16
 - (touches only and speaks only)
 - Over prophecy (the past) 17
 - Over man’s motives 18-22
 - Over nature 23-27
 - Over demons 28-34
- Chapter 9 – Over Sin

6

Structure

EXAMPLE: Biographical Interchange in 1 Samuel



2

Prayer

WE ARE INSTRUCTED “BY PRAYER AND PETITION WITH THANKSGIVING LET YOUR REQUEST BE KNOWN TO GOD.” PRAYER IS LISTENING.

“Pray without ceasing.”

1 Thessalonians 5:17

- Alone. (Matthew 14:23, Mark 1:35, Luke 9:18, Luke 22:39-41)
- In public. (John 11:41-42, John 12:27-30)
- Before meals. (Matthew 26:26, Mark 8:6, Luke 24:30, John 6:11)
- Before important decisions. (Luke 6:12-13),
- Before healing. (Mark 7:34-35)
- After healing. (Luke 5:16)
- To do the Father’s will. (Matthew 26:36-44)
- Taught on the importance of prayer. (Matthew 21:22, Mark 11:24-26, Matthew 7:7-11, Luke 11:9-13, John 14:13-14, John 15:7,16, John 16:23-24, Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:27-28, Matthew 6:5-15 - The Lord’s Prayer, Luke 11:2-4, Matthew 18:19-20).
- Laying of hands and praying for little children. (Matthew 19:13-15)
- Asking the Father to glorify His name. (John 12:27-28)
- At the Lord’s Supper. (Matthew 26:26)

- Prayed for Peter’s faith when Satan asked to “sift” him. (Luke 22:31-32)
- Prayed for Himself, His disciples, and all believers just before heading to Gethsemane. (John 17:1-26)
- In Gethsemane, before His betrayal, He prayed 3 separate prayers. (Matthew 26:36-46)
- Baptism. (Luke 3:21-22)
- Morning. (Mark 1:35-36)
- All Night. (Luke 6:12-13)
- While speaking to the Jewish leaders. (Matthew 11:25-26)
- Giving thanks to the Father before feeding 5000. (John 6:11)
- Before walking on water. (Matthew 14:23)
- While healing a deaf and mute man. (Mark 7:31-37)
- Giving thanks to the Father before feeding 4000. (Matthew 15:36)
- Before Peter called Jesus “the Christ.” (Luke 9:18)
- At the Transfiguration. (Luke 9:28-29)
- At the return of the seventy. (Luke 10:21)
- Before teaching His disciples the Lord’s Prayer. (Luke 11:1)
- Before raising Lazarus from the dead. (John 11:41-42)
- Right after being nailed to the cross, Jesus prayed, “Father forgive them; for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34)
- While on the cross. (Matthew 27:46)
- In His dying breath, Jesus prayed, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. (Luke 23:46)
- Prayed a blessing on the bread before He ate with others after His resurrection. (Luke 24:30)
- He blessed the disciples before His Ascension. (Luke 24:50-53)
- He is still making intercession on our behalf. (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25, 1 John 2:1)

“This is how you should pray, ‘Our Father in heaven, holy is your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us to temptation, but deliver us from evil.’”

Matthew 6:9-13

All who have walked
with God have viewed
prayer as the main
business of their lives.

Richard Foster

A man prayed, and at first
he thought that prayer was
talking. But then he became
more and more quiet until
in the end he realized that
prayer is listening.

Søren Kierkegaard

1

To Pray is to Change

If we are unwilling to change, we will abandon prayer as a noticeable characteristic of our lives.

- “I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer.” – M. Luther
- “God does nothing but in answer to prayer.” – J. Wesley
- “I withdraw from my business 7 times a day for prayer.” – A. Judson

God always meets us where we are and slowly moves us along to deeper things.

2

Simple Prayer

Pray as you can, not as you can't.

- To believe that God can reach us in the ordinary junctures of daily life is the beginning of prayer.
- The only place God can bless us is right where we are, because that is the only place we are!
- Simple prayer involves ordinary people bringing ordinary concerns to a loving and compassionate Father.

3

Prayer of Penthos

“Blessed are those who mourn.” Matthew 5:4

Salvation

- a. Recognition: there’s a problem and only God can solve it.
- b. Confess: I am guilty.
- c. Ask for Forgiveness: Forgive my deeds ...
- d. Repent: I will not repeat those deeds .
- e. Receive: God’s pardon.
- f. Obey God’s direction.

Sanctification

- a. Recognition.
- b. Confess: “I” am the problem.
- c. Repent of self-centeredness and fully surrender all: who I am and all that I do.
- d. Receive: the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
- e. Go forth in the power of the Holy Spirit and make disciples.

Joy is the result of a heart bowed in contrition.

“Those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.”

Psalms 126:5

God never despises “a broken and contrite heart.”

Psalms 51:17

4

Prayer of Examination

“Yahweh, you examine me and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts” Psalm 139:23.

Examen of the Exterior

- a. How has God been presented to us?
- b. How have we presented God to others?
- c. How have we responded to His presence?
- d. How have we been instruments of His grace?
- e. Rehearse the mighty deeds of God.

Examen of the Interior

- a. My time in God’s presence today, resulted in the following ...
- b. How are my thoughts, desires, attitudes, values, actions different from: yesterday, last week, last month, last year?

If the examination is solely a self-examination, we will always end up with excessive praise or blame.

5

Pray Intentionally

Beginning with your first encounter with an individual, enabling, enhancing, equipping them to hear and obey the Holy Spirit.

Everyday be faithful to stop and write in your Prayer-Listening Journal. God will change you. God will impact everyone you meet as you are going.

6

Covenant Prayer

Covenant of Holy Obedience: regardless of any circumstances, time, other people, results.

- a. **Time:** Every moment belongs to Him. Make sure to set apart time to be quite before Him everyday
- b. **Place:** Every step is Holy Ground because He dwells within us ... always.
- c. **Heart and Mind:** He is our one and only focus. “We are bought with a price, we are not our own.”

7

Prayer of Relinquishment

“Not my will, but Thine be done.”

- a. **Sanctification:** Do we demand that Christ get down here and solve our problems or do we join Him on the cross?
 - “It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” *Galatians 2:19-20*
 - A confident trust in the character of God produces the death of my own will. “God creates everything out of nothing ... and everything which God is to use, He first reduces to nothing.” *S. Kierkegaard*
- b. **A Pattern of Prayer:** Self-emptying, Surrender, Abandonment, Release, Resurrection.
- c. When it seems as if God has vanished. (Examen)
If we could make the Creator of heaven and earth instantly appear at our beck and call, we would not

be in communion with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

- d. We love God more than the gifts God brings.
- e. Purification of the Self.
- f. Exterior Results (They are no longer what moves us).
- g. Accomplishment, Health, Wealth, Job, Title, Recognition.
- h. Interior Results. (Emotions and feelings no longer drive us.)
- i. Peace, joy, “it is well,” contentment, victory, goodness.
- j. We seek to know, hear and understand God.

8

Prayer of Adoration

Not please, but thank you.

- a. Who He is.
- b. What He has done.

9

Sacramental/Liturgical Prayer

Focusing our hearts, minds, and our emotions.

10

Unceasing Prayer

Practice the Presence of God. The common ventures of life. Each hour/minute.

11

Petitionary Prayer

Our requests

- a. Understand God’s will/nature.
- b. Understand our will/nature.

12

Intercessory

Our gift to others.

13

An Exercise

To help with internal distractions.

Create a quiet, peaceful, beautiful location in your mind, maybe a colourful garden or by the sea, maybe beside a mountain stream. Invite Jesus there and sit down at His feet (what does He like?) Then in your mind get up and go get each of your friends/family/co-workers ... one by one. Bring them in to His presence and sit them down at His feet. “Jesus, this is my friend Bob that works at 7-11. I know that you know him better than I do. He seemed sad the last couple of days. When I see him in his free hours, what would you have me say to Him?” For your problems, fears and distractions, put them in a box and hand them to Jesus. “These are yours now, I want to hear and see you only.” Creating a visual place helps us eliminate random thoughts in our quiet time with Christ. (I’m hungry, I wonder what’s for lunch? Did I lock the door? I can’t believe my boss ...) This visual place uses up more of our concentration, so that our mind has less ability to wander. Some people listen to instrumental music with similar results. Give it a try and see if it helps.

To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world.

Karl Barth

3

Fasting

“THEY WILL FAST.” – JESUS

Everywhere in the world I go, people say, “Yes, I pray. Yes, I read the Bible.” But when asked about fasting there is almost always an uncomfortable silence. Yet Jesus said, “His disciples will fast.” Could it be if we are not fasting we are not really His disciples? Fasting is what gives fuel to hearing God and living a life in which every step is holy. Without fasting we are easily distracted by just about everything and slowly God’s voice fades until we no longer hear it for days, weeks and months. Fasting is the path to an unrestricted life with God that ushers every person you meet into very presence of the living God.

- Moses, David, Daniel, Anna, Elijah, Esther, Paul, Jesus—All of them fasted ... what about you?
- “When you give ...”
- “When you pray ...” (Matthew 6:1-18)
- “When you fast ...”
- “The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast” (Matthew 9:15).
- “When you fasted ... was it really for Me you fasted (Zechariah 7:5)?
- Let fasting be done unto the Lord with our eye solely fixed on Him. Let our intention be this alone, to glorify our God. —John Wesley
- Fasting reveals what we are attached to ... what controls us.
- “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.’” (Matthew 16:24)
- Fasting shows us the key to unlocking the power of God in and through our life.
- Biblical fasting always focuses on drawing our attention away from the material world to the person of Christ.
- Corporate and individual fasting.
- Early Church fasted on Wednesday and Friday.

SUGGESTIONS

- **Limited**
 - One item (phone/TV)
 - meal or favorite food/drink
 - An event (golf)
 - **Partial**
 - Food: 24 hours
 - Item: Park your car take the bus or taxi, you will allow Jesus to meet more people that way.
 - Event: Instead of a weekend of watching football, take a spiritual retreat to spend time alone with God.
 - **Expanded**
 - Longer periods or absolute (make sure it is from God and not to impress others, force God to do something or punish yourself). Remember the reason to fast is to help us focus on God and hear His voice only.
-
- “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said ...” (Acts 13:2)
 - “Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, ‘Why couldn’t we drive it out?’ He replied, ‘Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed ... Nothing will be impossible for you.’ This can only happen by prayer and fasting” (Matthew 17:19-22).

The first step in
being a disciple is
hearing from Him:

Scripture

Prayer

Fasting

“Whatever you do,
whether in word
or deed, do it all
in the name of the
Lord Jesus.”

Colossians 3:17

“I pray that out of His glorious riches
He may strengthen you with power
through His Spirit in your inner being,
so that Christ may dwell in your hearts
through faith. And I pray that you,
being rooted and established in love,
may have power, together with all the
saints, to grasp how wide and long
and high and deep is the love of Christ,
and to know this love that surpasses
knowledge – that you may be filled to
the measure of all fullness of God. Now
to Him who is able to do immeasurably
more than all we ask or imagine,
according to the power that is at work
within us, to Him be glory in the church
and in Christ Jesus throughout all
generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”

Ephesians 3:14-21

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disciplemaking
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About the Author

Karl Rigsby has been part of dynamic disciple multiplication networks around the world. He is partnering with various denominations with a particular emphasis on Creative Access Areas (places where sharing the gospel is illegal or restricted). He has witnessed dramatic growth in the Kingdom in the most difficult locations in the world, as individuals respond to Christ's command to make disciples "as you are going through your 'normal' day" wherever God has placed you.

Dr. Rigsby has also served as a professor at secular and Christian universities and has presented workshops and lectures in over one hundred countries.