

HPIM

HARVEST PREPARATION INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES



Authentic Disciples

"A COMPOSITE OF TEACHINGS BY INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS"



Authentic Disciples

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Introduction

A Resource for Making Authentic Disciples

Harvest Preparation International Ministries is called and established, by the grace of God, to train church leaders and equip them to reach their fullest potential. *The objective is to see individuals in the church raised up to become leaders in their spheres of influence*, helping to establish the Kingdom of God in those spheres. This is our mandate and our goal is fulfilled through ...

“Leaders Training Leaders”

In Matthew we see clearly in the Lord’s Prayer, “Thy Kingdom come Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven” The result of His Kingdom coming, being established, brings authentic transformation of the spheres of influence that make up community. The effect of His Kingdom being established in communities can be defined as “Cultural Transformation”. (Culture - the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or social group)

How does God intend for this to happen? His plan is to use us, His followers, to bring “Authentic Transformation”. Center to His is the manifestation of authentic disciples, Men and women who are Authentic Disciples of Jesus Christ.

It is with a humble heart that I introduce one of the most important topics for church leaders to consider. When we consider the topic of Authentic Disciples we cannot help but see that this was God’s plan from the beginning, to accomplish His purposes through us, His disciples.

Jesus walked along the shore, by the Sea of Galilee, and called fishermen to leave their nets and follow Him. This was the first manifestation in Scripture of God unfolding His plan for us to become Authentic Disciples of His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus did not call these men to test a theory, but rather to fulfill God’s plan to accomplish His purpose, through Authentic Disciples.

As you read through this manual you will benefit from the revelation of gifted teachers, concerning “Authentic Disciples”. Each contributor focuses on a particular area, building and establishing a foundation to teach and disciple others. Our goal is to provide tools that will help people discover their passion to be authentic disciples, that they may...

“Go and make disciples of all nations”



Authentic Disciples

Chapter 1 God's Design



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GOD'S DESIGN

Dr. Don Richter
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One of the most amazing accounts in scripture is found in Matthew's gospel. It is the moment when the response of Peter, to the invitation of Jesus reveals the beginning of what God intended before the foundations of the earth. I am convinced God saw the fulfillment of His will before He said, "let there be light". As time unfolds we realize nothing is by accident or mistake in God's perfect plan. God is very intentional regarding His strategy to see the Bride of Christ manifest. A plan that is "out of this world" conceived before the foundations of the earth.

Matthew 4:18-19

18 Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19 And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

This was their response, "they dropped their nets and followed Him".

Follow The Disciple Maker

As disciples we need to follow the One who invited us to follow Him. Too often people find themselves following someone or something other than the One who called them into a special relationship with Himself. We need to be careful to stay on course, to not be distracted by the many things that interfere with us being who He called us to be. Several things can be learned from this passage, and will serve us well in the fulfillment of our desire to be authentic disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Intent Was To Make Disciples

We need to recognize that Jesus, just as His Father, is very purposeful in all that He does. He called the four fishermen to follow Him, not because He needed a group of people following Him to validate His call and ministry, but to fulfill this aspect of God's plan, that there would be authentic disciples. So many times the success of a ministry is validated by how many people are following a person, creed, doctrine, or philosophy. It isn't the number of disciples that validate a person's ministry, it is the fulfillment of the purpose for which we are called; to go and make disciples.

When He called these men He already had in mind that He would be making them into fishers of men. I believe He knew there would be a time when He would say to them, "Go and make disciples of all nations". We know this took about three and a half years. We need to look at the discipling process that is recorded in scripture to glean the foundational truths of our being, and making an authentic disciple.

Authentic Disciples Have An Authentic Revelation

It is impossible to have an authentic relationship with Jesus unless you have had an authentic revelation of Who He is.

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered and said, “ You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, “ Blessed are you, Simon Bar- Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. *Matthew 16:16-18*

Without having benefit of a personal revelation regarding this truth it is impossible to engage in the process of becoming an authentic disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Too often people engage in the discipling process based on another's personal revelation. The result compromises the authenticity of our own personal relationship with Jesus. This kind of scenario actually produces followers of a person, creed, doctrine, or philosophy. This path is the easier one for the flesh because it does not require dying to self. The necessity of dying to self is paramount to becoming an authentic disciple.

Authentic Disciples Have A Personal Relationship With Jesus

There is a passage that reveals the level of close personal relationship that is possible for us to have with the Lord Jesus Christ.

²⁵ Then, leaning back on Jesus ' breast, he said to Him, “ Lord, who is it?”

²⁶ Jesus answered, “ It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.” And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. *(John 13:25,26)*

²⁰ Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, “Lord, who is the one who betrays You?” ²¹ Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, “But Lord, what about this man? *(John 21:20-21)*

Can you imagine, being so close that you could lay your head on His breast? Just think, John could actually hear the heartbeat of our Lord. Authentic disciples embrace a personal relationship that allows them to know the heartbeat of the Lord Jesus Christ

Authentic Disciples Abide In Him (*The True Vine*)

The connection determines the outcome. As we look at this scripture we realize that which not connected is discarded i.e. “cast out, withered and burned”.

Authentic disciples cannot be, if they are connected.

¹ “ I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word, which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ “ I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. (*John 15:1-8*)

We must embrace what God has established; that we can become one with Him and bear much fruit. Becoming one with Him is a relational experience not a religious experience. Many try to become one with Him through religious dogma rather than being committed to pay the cost required to be one who abides in Him, the true vine.

Authentic Disciples Leave All to Follow Christ

In the book of Luke we find a passage that clearly states a prerequisite for being an Authentic Disciple.

²⁵ Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ²⁶ “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷ And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.” (*Luke 14:25-27*)

This passage presents a rather disturbing concept of hating what is, and has been our life, in order to follow Jesus. This is difficult, if not an impossible challenge to every human being, without a closer look into the meaning of the word hate in the original language.

The word hate in this passage is translated from this Greek word.

g3404. μισέω miseō; from a primary μῖσος misos (hatred); to detest (especially to persecute); by extension, **to love less**:— hate

Clearly the intent in the original text is to prefer Jesus above all things. (*to love less all things pertaining to our natural life.*) My challenge is this, how are we

doing at preferring Jesus above all things?

Authentic Disciple Are Not Mocked

We need to count the cost and be willing to commit to complete the process of becoming an authentic disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it — ²⁹ lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰ saying, ‘ This man began to build and was not able to finish. ’ (*Luke 14:28-30*)

If one does not count the cost he will find himself compromising his commitment as His disciple, by preferring things above the Lord Jesus. This will be seen and that one who said, ‘I am His disciple’, will be mocked!

Authentic Disciples Forsake All

I am not able in my own strength to accomplish all that needs to be accomplished. Then I have no other option.

³¹ Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. ³³ So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (*Luke 14:31-33*)

I want us to look at the original text again, for a better understanding of this passage. The word forsake is translated from the following Greek word.

g0657. ἀποτάσσομαι apotassomai; middle voice from 575 and 5021; literally, to say adieu (by departing or dismissing); figuratively, to renounce:— bid farewell, forsake, take leave, send away

In reality I need to say good-bye, not I’ll see you later. This means to totally forsake my old life, (to say good-bye) in exchange for my new identity as an Authentic Disciple.

Authentic Disciples Are Like Their Teacher

This truth needs to be our testimony as we continue to become His disciple.

A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher. (*Exodus 9:16*)

The First Disciples were introduced

- To a relationship
- They were introduced to a purpose
- They were introduced to a strategy

The First Disciples Discovered

- The love that can only come from God. (*John 17*)
- Their need to grow deeper in their relationship with God. (*Eph 1:16-18*)
- They were created to worship. (*Rom 12*)
- The Kingdom of God personified. (*Col 1:27*)
- The necessity for transformed attitudes, actions, and attributes. (*1 Thess 1:2*)
- Their lives are to be managed in order to bring honor to God. (*Eph 5:8-14*)
- Their call to serve. (*Mt 20:28*)
- The need for Christian community. (*1 John 1:7*)
- How to lead others to faith in Christ. (*Mt 5:15-16*)
- How to fulfill the God given mandate to go and make disciples. (*Mt 28:19,20*)

Let us become a disciple maker like “The Disciple Maker”, the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Go and make disciples”



Authentic Disciples

Chapter 2

Significant Characteristics Of an Authentic Disciple



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SIGNIFICANT CHARACTERISTICS OF A DISCIPLE

Dr. Chidiogo Ezennaya
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We must ask ourselves, "What makes an authentic disciple of Jesus Christ?" "Are we authentic disciples?"... Better yet, am I an authentic disciple of Jesus Christ?... "Do we look and act like Jesus?"... "Are we making disciples in the sense of what an authentic disciple is?"

Inevitably there are many answers to those questions, but the command stays the same ... "Go and make disciples!" To make a disciple, we must first become one.

Unfortunately many who call themselves Christians are not at all. The definition of Christian is Christ-like or little Christ. Becoming Christian is something that is the product of being an authentic disciple of Christ. Authentic discipleship is something deeper than a mere profession and something higher, because it is a spiritual and supernatural thing.

An authentic disciple is a "disciple indeed". To be a "disciple indeed" is to be a disciple in one's heart and spirit, made such by the supernatural and secret operations of God upon our conscience.

If we must be called and known as authentic disciples then we must be entirely dead to this world, and totally consecrated to God. We must not only walk after God, as all good men do, but passionately walk with God, as if we were in heaven already.

We must live above board and rate. The business of our life, our constant care and work must be; while others live to themselves and the world, we must live to please God.

The word, disciple, literally means "learner" or "follower." That definition suggests that one can be a disciple of anything that he follows after.

However, in ancient Greece, a disciple was considered an apprentice. That is, one training under a teacher of some sort. Therefore, a Christian is not just a mere follower, but he is training under the instruction and example of Jesus Christ!

MARKS OF AUTHENTIC DISCIPLESHIP

Let us consider some marks of an authentic disciple and may God enable us to believe that we possess them.

1. Authentic Discipleship implies DEVOTEDNESS.

When the disciples followed the Lord, they devoted themselves to him. If then a man has not been brought, by a divine work of grace upon his heart, to embrace his blood as the only atoning sacrifice for sin; if he has not, in the depths of his soul, thus given himself wholly and solely unto the Lord to be his forever; he lacks one mark of authentic discipleship. He is yet half-hearted; his "heart is divided, and he is found faulty;"

2. Authentic Discipleship Implies Total SEPARATION.

There must be total separation from a world dead in wickedness; separation from another world dead in profession; separation from all God dishonoring doctrines, from all reckless and careless professors, from all things that in any way bring a reproach upon the gospel, or are opposed to God's glory and to God's truth.

And this not merely outward separation--that is in a measure easy--but inward separation - separation in heart from the spirit of the world; separation from that spirit of covetousness, which as a canker seems to be feeding upon the very vitals of God's Church.

Separation from formality, self-righteousness, superstition, will worship, and all that "leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy;" inward separation of heart, soul, and spirit, whereby we yield ourselves up unto the Lord, that he may "work in us that which is well pleasing in his sight."

3. Authentic Discipleship implies an utter PROSTRATION of our own WISDOM, our own STRENGTH, and our own RIGHTEOUSNESS at the feet of the Lord.

But in giving ourselves up to the Lord Jesus Christ, in receiving him into our hearts as "our Lord and our God," in submitting to his righteous authority, we prostrate before him everything inconsistent with his inward dominion and kingdom in our hearts.

The authentic disciple has his own strength prostrated before the Lord, that the power of Christ may rest upon him, and shine forth in his infirmities.

The authentic disciple prostrates too his righteousness at the Lord's feet; he feels that it is nothing but pollution and abomination before God; and thus he casts it away at the feet of Jesus, that he may stand clothed in that lovely robe, which the Lord of life and glory wrought out and brought in.

And he prostrates also his wisdom, so as no longer to be wise in his own eyes nor prudent in his own sight; but renounces all wisdom except that which comes from God's own mouth into his soul.

4. Authentic Discipleship implies CONFORMITY to the likeness and image of Jesus.

What is the disciple to follow his Master for? Is it not to catch some resemblance to him? Is it not to be imbued with a measure of his spirit? Is it not to be penetrated and pervaded with his meekness and gentleness?

"The disciple is to be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord." Mt 10:25 He is to think as Jesus thought; for says the Apostle, "we have the mind of Christ."

He is to speak as Jesus spoke; for his "conversation is to be seasoned with salt."

He is to walk, in a measure, as Jesus walked; for "He has left us an example, that we should follow His steps."

JESUS REVEALS WAYS TO KNOW AN AUTHENTIC DISCIPLE

If we are called to be authentic disciples of Christ (Mark 1:17) and if we are called to go and make authentic disciples (Matthew 28:19) then we need to go to the Word to find out what an authentic disciple is. Jesus makes it clear what authentic discipleship is in the Bible

First, Jesus says in John 8:31, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.”

Just going to worship on Sundays does not make you a disciple of Christ any more than being in a garage can make you a car.

We must abide or live in God’s word. The Scriptures must be a part of our daily schedule. No one can walk daily with God without living in the Word.

Second, John 13:35 says, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Love for the body of Christ is discipleship! How easy it is to spot a person who is following Jesus - it’s the person who is pouring out acts of lovingkindness in the church of God.

Finally, John 15:8 says, “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be my disciples.”

In other words, what kind of results am I producing? Can people see the fruit of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness & self-control overflowing from my life that Paul lists as the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22?

An authentic disciple is one who bears the fruit of the Spirit, reaches out to the lost, and teaches others to do the same. Come, let’s follow Jesus.

WHO IS AN AUTHENTIC DISCIPLE?

An authentic disciple is one who sets God always before him and lives as those that are always under his eye. He lives a life of communion with God both in ordinances and providences. He makes God’s Word his rule and His Glory his end in all his actions and ways

An authentic disciple makes it his constant care and endeavour in every thing to please God, and do nothing to offend him. He lives with the consciousness of God’s abiding presence every day. He absolutely complies with God’s will, and concurs with His designs

1. Getting Dedicated to a Local Church.

“I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.” (John 13:15-17)

“Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church.” (1 Cor 14:12)

An authentic disciple ultimately commits himself to serving or ministering in the Local Church. You demonstrate your dedication to Jesus Christ himself and the Body of Christ by your commitment to a local church. The local church is the hope of the world.

2. Being a Friend of Jesus and Knowing Christ Intimately.

“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants... for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you” (John 15:14–15).

“...And I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (John 14:21). “Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments” (I John 2:3).

An authentic disciple is passionately committed to Jesus – zealously putting him first in every area of life. He is sensitive & submitted to the Holy Spirit maintaining a posture of openness and humility to the Spirit's inner promptings

3. Spending Time Daily in Bible Reading & Prayer.

“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. John 15:5 NKJV

Most people don't know how so they neglect this. Pray, Listen, and Sing clearly.
Let His word speak loudly to your heart. He evaluates life according to biblical standards. He knows the word of God and applies it effectively to all aspects of life; he is not distracted by the world's standards.

4. Cleansing the Heart and Soul.

“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you” (John 15:3–4). “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17).

An authentic disciple lives morally pure – recognizes their body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and through his empowerment walks in holiness of thought, word and deed as an act of genuine worship

5. Abiding in and Perfecting God's Love

“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love” (John 15:10).

“Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him” (I John 2:5).

An authentic disciple is dedicated to a healthy family – flowing first out of an abiding and perfecting love relationship with God, they actively seek to promote strong loving relationships in the home

6. Building Genuine Relationships with Other Dedicated Believers.

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:35 NIV

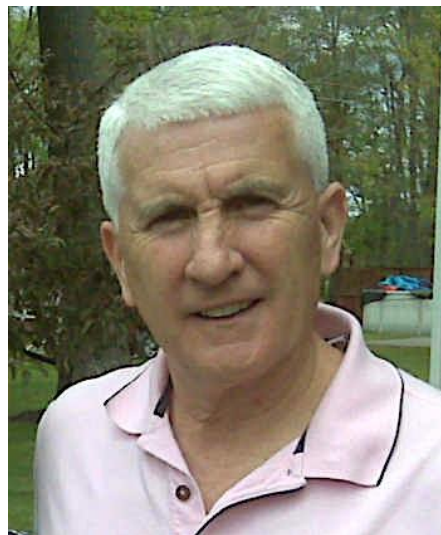
Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” 1 Cor. 15:33 NIV

As authentic disciples we love the hurting and the broken and we reach out to them. But we must build close friendships with believers who are strong in their faith. No one is perfect but there are people who will bring strength to our life. We need as many of those people in our life as we do the broken.



Authentic Disciples

Chapter 3 Releasing Women to Their Place of Destiny



DR. CHUCK HAMILTON
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RELEASING WOMEN TO THEIR PLACE OF DESTINY IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

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There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Gal. 3:28 NKJV

The subject of women and their place in the body of Christ is one of the most hotly debated themes among church leaders and Christians. It is a debate that is often carried out without Biblical understanding and argued from the point of cultural and historical bias. In this teaching we will look at Biblical examples of **women in ministry, examine the scripture concerning women, and consider Jesus's ministry to, and release of women** to share the "Good News" of His life, death, and resurrection to newness of life, and consider a couple of hotly debated and contested scriptures that are often taken out of context. This teaching is certainly not exhaustive, but meant to provoke thought and stimulate leaders to develop a Biblical world view of women in ministry.

Apostle Paul: Women in Ministry Romans 16

I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea...V1

- Here "servant" can be translated servant, minister or deacon. Paul's use of the masculine form of the word "servant" connotes her pastoral leadership in the church. Servant is *diakonos* in the Greek. Almost everywhere in the New Testament it is translated as "minister."

Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus...V3

- Priscilla and Aquila were a husband and wife team that helped Paul in the ministry, note that Priscilla is respectfully listed first. Priscilla was one of Paul's coworkers (which involved preaching). Acts 18:26
- V5 Suggests that Priscilla and Aquila were co-pastors of the house church that met in their home. (Same phrase as in Philemon 2)

Greet Mary, who labored much for us. V6

- The language of Paul's greeting Mary includes the same words he uses elsewhere to speak of ministerial labor in the gospel.

*Greet Andronicus and **Junia**, my countryman and my fellow prisoners, who are of **note among the apostles**, who also were in Christ before me. V7*

- Junia was prominent among the apostles. Note: Some manuscripts from the 13th century onward attempted to cover up the fact Junia was a woman by changing the name to the masculine Junias, but tradition strongly

affirms the status of this female, who may have been among the original core of apostles.

I. Other examples of women in ministry:

Deborah:

- Was both a leader and a prophet in the O. T. Judges 4-5
- Deborah was the head of state, as Samuel and other prophets were in the days before Israel had a King.

Miriam:

...And I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. Micah 6:4

- Miriam was chosen, like her brothers Moses and Aaron, to lead the nation during the forty years in the wilderness. The Lord gave the nation three key leaders, one of whom was Miriam.
- She was also a prophetess and worship leader. Ex. 15:20

Other women used of the Lord in the Bible:

- Huldah, who confirmed the scroll of the Lord that had been found was God's Word that sparked reform.
2 Ki. 22:14, 2 Chr. 34:22
- Isaiah described his wife as a prophet. Is. 8:3
- Philip's four daughters were all prophets, according to Acts 21:8-9.

Ps. 68:11 "The Lord gives the command; the women who proclaim the good tidings are a great host. NASB

II. Jesus's example of recognizing and releasing women to their destiny.

Jesus's treatment of women and His response to them in the Bible was a total counter cultural shock to the male dominated society and their treatment of women. Jesus refused to allow a double standard, he did not exclude them from ministry and apparently did not place limits on their destiny in the Kingdom of God.

A. John 8 tells the story of a woman caught in adultery. Jesus's handling of this situation speaks loudly about His response to the double standard that existed, and His refusal to be a part of the charade that was placed before him. Consider the following:

- The woman was "caught" in the act of adultery. Jn. 8:4, Where was the man? The scripture teaches that both man and woman were to be: *...the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.* Lev. 20:10, Deu. 22:22 Jesus refused to be drawn into the duplicity of the situation.
- His response, *... "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her". V 7*
- He refused the double standard, sin was sin. Jesus maintained the woman's value without compromising the law, yet calling her to account for her actions.

B. One of the foundation stones of Bible truth was given by Jesus to Mary, sister of Lazarus in John 11.

- Mary “sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what He said.” The term to “sit at the feet” of a teacher was a common expression used to show the formal mentoring relationship between a rabbi and his disciple. Paul used the same expression to describe his relationship to Gamaliel. Acts 22:3
- Think about the wonderful and powerful truth that Jesus shared with Mary and Martha:

Jesus said to Martha, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.” John 11:25-26

- This revelation was not given to any of the twelve apostles. These treasured words were given to Mary! Note their dialogue as Jesus shared this truth with Mary. *He asked, “Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord, she told him, “I believe you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.”* Who does that sound like? Peter’s confession in the other three gospels.

C. The woman at the well. John 4

- As a Samaritan, the woman at the well was rejected by Jews, used by men, and shunned by Samaritan women. How did Jesus respond to her? Jesus looked beyond her circumstances and by his actions affirmed, valued, and led her to a place of transformation. How?
- He listened to her questions, spent time with her, valued her in a way that she was able to respond to his kindness.
- Jesus then spoke to her a beautiful and powerful truth:

God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth. V 4

- He also told her that He was the Messiah, V 25-26
- Jesus took time to instruct this woman, considered an outcast, in the ways of the Kingdom of God. He did this for a woman that others considered a lost cause and unworthy of any value in life and especially in that society.
- The result of Jesus’s trust extended to the Samaritan woman? Her testimony to her city turned it upside down and resulted in immediate and eternal fruit—all because Jesus treated a despised and alienated woman as He would have treated any other person seeking truth.

And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified...

D. Jesus commissioned Mary Magdalene to take the first proclamation of His Resurrection.

Jesus said to her, “...go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.” Jn. 20:17b

- Jesus could have given this command and privilege to His disciples, but did not. He gave Mary Magdalene the honor and responsibility to take this truth to the disciples in a time of great need. The greater the message, the more important the messenger, Jesus choose Mary for this task. What does this say about His recognition, release, and commissioning of women in leadership and ministry in the Kingdom of God?
- Mary was not the only one. What about the woman who came on resurrection morning and He said to her:

“Do not be afraid. Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee, there they will see me.” Mt. 28:9-10

III. Dealing with contested scriptures about women!

The Bible is full of statements that can be, and have been, used to support two contradictory positions. Three things are absolutely necessary for good sound Biblical foundation; a spirit of humility with a teachable spirit, recognizing personal and doctrinal bias, and taking the scripture in its cultural, historical, and contextual setting and letting it speak. If all the scripture on any particular topic of the Bible is examined, seeking truth, and is done under the leading of the Holy Spirit, using time honored means of scripture interpretation it will lead to truth. Concerning the theme of a women’s place in leadership and ministry, many leaders have failed to personally search the Word of God for truth. It is easy to embrace the “traditional” interpretation without the labor of prayer and study to find truth.

Scriptures Contested:

Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. 1 Tim. 2:11-12

Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.
I Cor. 14:34-35 NIV

- One question we must ask; is Paul’s teaching on women in line with what Jesus taught and practiced?
- Another; is there a consistency between Paul’s controversial verses and the rest of his teaching? In answer to this question: Paul wrote, “*I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man...*” He also wrote, “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*” **Gal. 3:28**

Note: It is written to “**your**” women, in other words, to specific women in the Corinthian Church. Paul is not forbidding women to manifest spiritual gifts in the service (see 11:5, Acts 2:18, 21:9). Rather he prohibits undisciplined discussion that would disturb the service and keep unbelievers from hearing the message.

Regarding 1 Tim. 2:11-12 the word “authority” is a key.

- Authority (in the Greek) is not used anywhere else in the Bible. Authority is most often translated *exousia*, which speaks of rightful or positive authority, but **authentēin**, writes J. Lee Grady, “has a forceful and extremely negative connotation. It implies a more specific meaning than to ‘to have authority over’ and can be translated, **to dominate, to usurp, or to take control**. The noun form of this word can be defined as “one who with his own hands kills another or himself.
- Paul’s point was that women in the church should not dominate or usurp authority.
- Paul’s writings clearly point to walking in the “unity of the faith” or “unity of the Spirit”. Eph. 4:3, 13. By the nature of unity it is necessary that we recognize the mandate of God that men and women are equal in the eyes of the Lord. Jesus walked out his ministry recognizing, releasing, and empowering women into their divine place of authority. By His love, compassion and example of honoring women, men must embrace, release, and partner with women to see His kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. When there is recognition of divine authority, mutual submission, and anointed lives the work of the kingdom will accelerate and God will be glorified.
- There is much more that can be written about these scriptures and these few thoughts are to provoke an honest search of the scriptures and a consideration of how leaders can and should value, support, and release women into their divine destiny.

Recommended Reading:

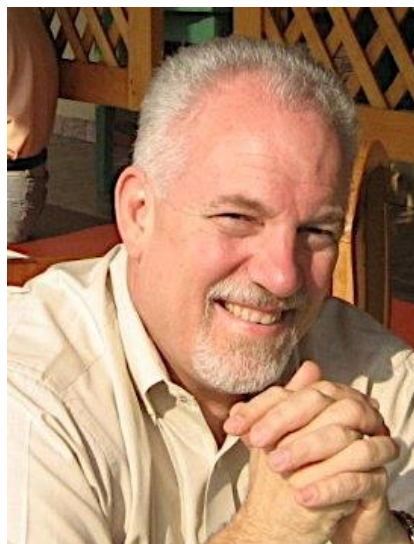
Why Not Women? Loren Cunningham, David Joel Hamilton, with Janice Rogers

Powerful & Free—confronting the glass ceiling for women in the church, Danny Silk



Authentic Disciples

Chapter 4 A Global Perspective of Christianity, Making Disciples



DR. FRANK PARRISH
Prescott, AZ

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE OF CHRISTIANITY, MAKING DISCIPLES

Dr Frank Parrish
Director of World MAP, Prescott, AZ

*Incredibly timely for this stage in the development of what God is doing globally.

*The more I studied the larger this subject became.

- Discipleship is essentially about God's purpose to be known, worshipped and obeyed by all nations.
- This is clearly revealed in the Great Commission given in all the Gospels and Acts.
- But God's purpose to be known, worshipped and obeyed by all people's is the major theme or thread that runs throughout the whole of scripture = from Genesis to Revelation!
- This is the metanarrative that ties the whole narration of the Bible together.

***Discipling and Discipleship is done at the personal/local level but the target and intent of its design is to reach the whole world!**

*This is a critical framework of understanding the nature and purpose of disciple-making.

***As stated before this subject is vast in its implications, there is need to break it down to get a better grasp of it.**

- Why do it?
- How do we do it?
- What does it look like?

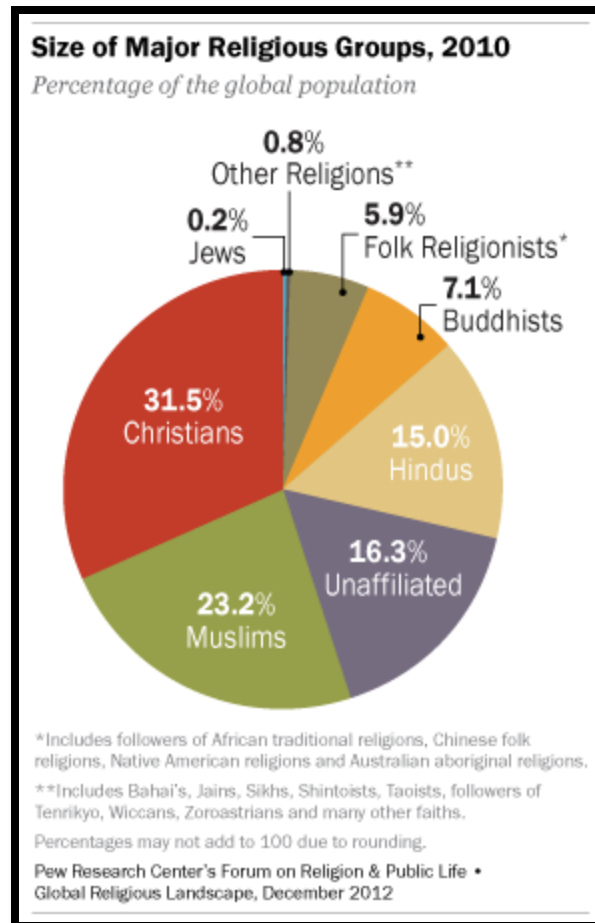
I. **Why disciple?** Simply stated:

- Jesus did it
- Jesus commanded it
- Jesus is the focus of it
- Necessary for spiritual survival in our world

It is often necessary to know what is happening in a given situation in order to know what we should be doing about it. In order to more fully understand the purpose of the command by Jesus to disciple we need a clearer perspective. Let's look at the 'big picture' of what God is doing in the world right now.

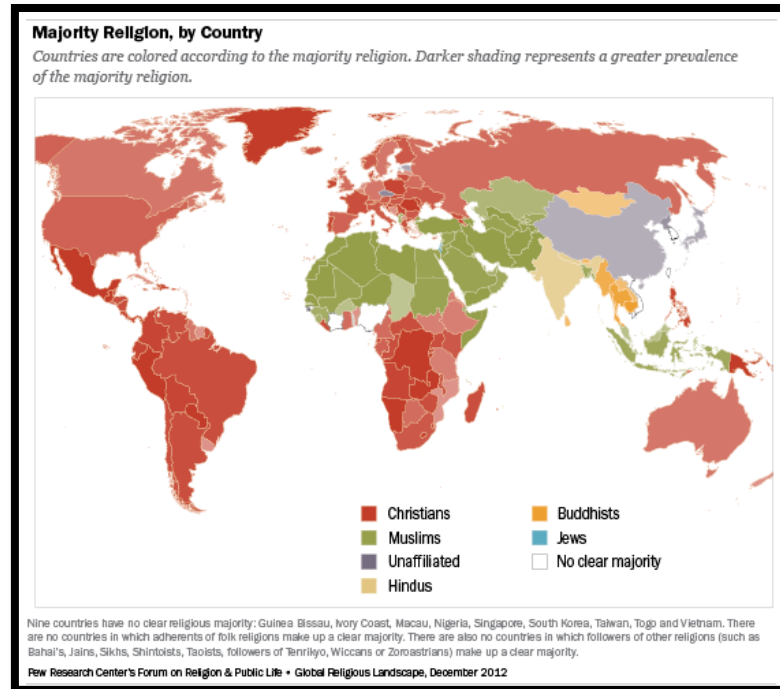
A. Snapshot of Global Christianity

1. 84% of people identify with some kind of religion – approx. population 7.2 billion.

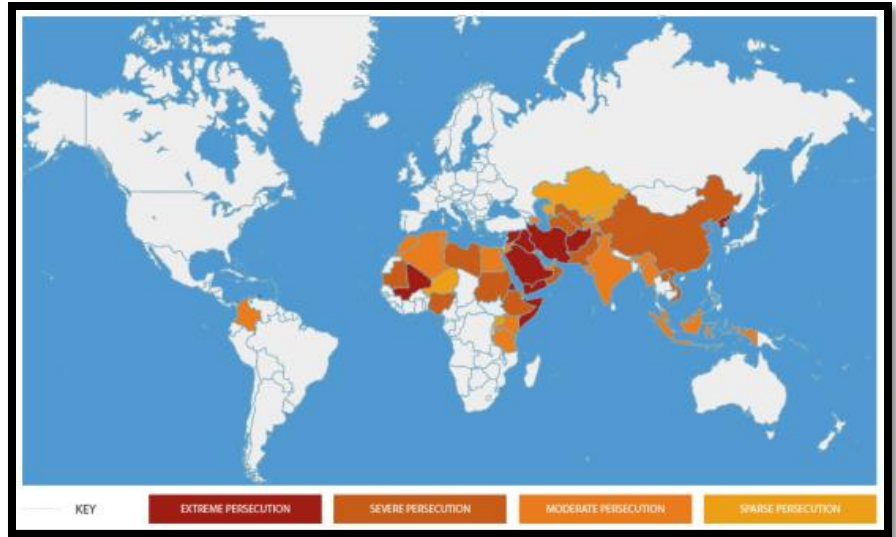


- a. Christians – 2.2 billion = 31.5
- b. Muslims – 1.6 billion = 23.2
- c. Hindus – 1 Billion = 15%
- d. Buddhists – 500 million = 7%
- e. Folk Religious (Animism) – 400 million = 5.9%
- f. Other religions – 58 million = .8%
Shinto, wicca, tao, zoroastrian, Bahai, sikhism, Jainism
- g. Judaism – 14 million = .2%
- h. Unaffiliated – 1.1 Billion = 16.3%
"Nones" = atheists, agnostics, New Age = believe in God or 'universal spirit'
 - 71% of North Korea, 52% of China
 - This group is growing fastest in the area where other religions were historically dominant. (Europe and North America)

2. Current look at Christianity globally



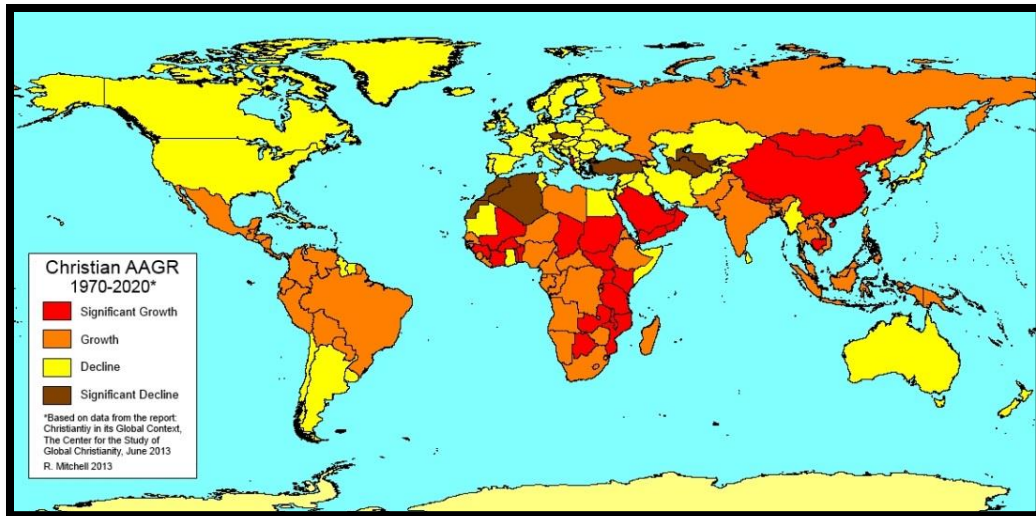
- Christianity is the most evenly distributed among the nations of any religion.
 - Followers of Christ found in every single nation on earth (World Christian Encyc., 2ed. Vol. 1).
 - 100 years ago 80% of Christians were in Europe and North America.
 - But 40% (or more) of Christians in Europe and N.A. are considered nominal/cultural rather than vital.
 - Major growth of global Christianity has shifted south and east.
 - Median age of Christians in Europe is 42, in sub-Saharan Africa - 19! Great potential for growth!
 - Median age in Islam is 23 also poised for growth.
3. “Great Commission” Christians
- 1.2 billion would call themselves Christians that share their faith (balance of 2.2 billion total is Catholic/Orthodox).
 - Approx. 748 million (of these 602 million are Pentecostal) – would be considered “Great Commission Christians” that share their faith aggressively and act on the mandate of **Matt 28:18-20**.
 - This group’s average growth rate is 6.9% - faster than total world population growth rate.
 - But this growth comes at a cost:
 Of the 160,000+ Christian martyrs per year, approximately half (80,000) are “Great Commission Christians”.



Between Life and Death

1. 7.2 Billion people on our planet right now.
2. In 2011 W.H.O. reported 55 million died (150,685 per day)
3. At 29.2% of world's population unevangelized.
 - a. Around 44,000 of these unevangelized die every day.
 - b. Equivalent of 88 Jumbo Jets – 747's - going down everyday.
4. Out of 12.3 trillion dollars, 11.4 billion is given to missions and only 1% (\$1,140,000) is given to reach the unreached.
5. Of 16,000 people groups, 6,900 remain unreached.
 - a. There are over 7 million "Great Commission Christians" in 23,500 denominations, if just over 1,000 congregations or 3½ denominations, could each adopt 1 unreached people group for strategic prayer, giving and sending. We could likely fulfill **Matt 24:14** within the decade!
6. Currently in 5th period of advance and expansion as Gospel is being proclaimed globally.

*current rate of salvations globally 82,000 every 24 hours!



- Western missions sending was a large part of this post WWII growth + advance.
 - But the subsequent growth came from **indigenous evangelical movements** around the world.
 - Two great examples are China and Latin America
- Shining example of China
 - all western missionaries removed by 1946-1949. By 1954 the 3 Self Patriotic (government controlled) Church established.
 - In 1975 estimated less than 3 million evangelical believers = but today over 75 million!
 - But most significantly: the Church of China not only is growing but sending out missionaries to other nations!
 -



- Latin America growth of evangelicals 3X's faster than growth of population.
 - ¾ of this growth is amongst Pentecostals.
 - Many indigenous national churches better able to reach their population than western missionaries.
 - Birthed over 400 mission agencies with more than 10,000 missionaries serving mostly amongst the un-evangelized especially Muslims.
 -

With these basic facts on the current state of global Christianity, let's focus in on Christ's

B. "Make Disciples of all nations!"

1. 11 frightened, confused ordinary working class men (fishermen, tax gatherers, political trouble makers, dreamers) hear Christ's final instructions.
 - How can these 11-12 ordinary men take one Gospel into all the world?!?
2. *Great Commission in all 4 Gospels*
 - **Matt 28:18-20** authority, presence
 - **Mark 16:15-18** signs following those who believe evidence of Spirit's presence
 - **Luke 24:46-49** power of Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8)
 - **John 20:21-23 (see also John 17:18-19)** Sent and the Holy Spirit
 - Only 2 imperatives in these 4 accounts
 - 1) Preach
 - 2) Make disciples

"going", "baptizing", "teaching" are participles describing how preaching + discipling will take place in all the peoples of the world.
3. Our more modern and thoughtful paradigm of leadership and church growth would require a vast organization, huge amounts of money, lengthy schooling and training, intensive demographic studies of population movement, etc. etc!
4. But what was really needed was an infinitely reproducible model that is trans-cultural, unlimited by socio-economic status, educational opportunities or developed personal abilities (talent, intelligence, etc.) and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
5. The mandate to make disciples in all nations is not merely making of converts in all countries.
 - Wari, Nigeria – million people attend crusade spoke with several pastors result was minor to non-existent in local churches.
 - Problem of "reversion" those not disciplined. falling back to prior religion.
 - Evangelism w/o discipleship is like fathering children w/o raising them

6. In studying Acts, it was the making and multiplying of disciples that made possible the continuing growth of the church and the expansion of the gospel of the Kingdom.

Stop and ponder: Jesus came, lived for 33 years on earth, confronted His own unenthusiastic missionary nation, was rejected by many, was crucified and buried, rose again, and underscored the same longstanding commission to all who would respond, before ascending to the Father.

Today even the most agnostic historian stands amazed that what began in a humble stable in Bethlehem of Palestine, a backwater of the Roman Empire, in less than 300 years was given control of the emperors' palace in Rome. How did it happen? It is a truly incredible story.

*-Ralph Winter
Perspective On the World
Christian Movement, 3rd. ed., 1999*

7. Pattern of growth in N.T. Church was
- 1) Make disciples
 - 2) From body of disciples recognize and raise up leaders who will
 - 3) Plant churches, make disciples, produce more leaders for church multiplication giving rise to a national movement
 - 4) Church multiplication into national movement to cross cultural involvement sending missionaries who will make disciples...!!!
***it all starts with making disciples**

8. *How could these 12 ordinary men even begin to fulfill such a God-sized command?*

- *Jesus promised:
 - He would be with them
 - He would send the same Spirit He had to empower them
 - And they would go with His authority
- **"I have made you my disciples, now go and do likewise – make disciples of other who follow Me just as you are."
 - And these would in their turn make and multiply disciples until there are Christ followers in every nation!

9. Each One – Teach One **Eph. 4:11-16; 2Tim 2:2**

- Primary purpose of any church leader is to teach, train, equip and release others
- As leaders we tend to either not train others or to only train them to serve with us in our ministry
***Kingdom of God mindset vs. kingdom of me mindset**
- If we follow Paul's instructions it sets off a chain reaction of multiplication that can reach the entire world!
***church in Rome founded before Paul got there**

EACH ONE - TEACH ONE

AT END OF	# OF PERSONS TRAINED

- Take one faithful man and spend one year pouring your life into them and here's what can happen:

EACH ONE - TEACH ONE			
AT END OF	# OF PERSONS TRAINED		
Year 1	2	Year 18	262,144
Year 2	4	Year 19	524,288
Year 3	8	Year 20	1,048,576
Year 4	16	Year 21	2,097,152
Year 5	32	Year 22	4,194,304
Year 6	64	Year 23	8,388,608
Year 7	128	Year 24	16,777,216
Year 8	256	Year 25	33,554,432
Year 9	512	Year 26	67,108,864
Year 10	1,024	Year 27	134,217,728
Year 11	2,048	Year 28	268,435,456
Year 12	4,096	Year 29	536,870,912
Year 13	8,192	Year 30	1,073,741,824
Year 14	16,384	Year 31	2,147,483,648
Year 15	32,768	Year 32	4,294,967,296
Year 16	65,536	Year 33	8,589,934,592
Year 17	131,072		

(Taken from The Shepherd's Staff, Section A.1, pg. 3)

***The whole point of discipling is to make disciples who make disciples, who make disciples, who make disciples...!**

II. How Do We Make Disciples

The Challenge of Making Disciples Today

A. For the **Disciple-Maker**:

1. Western culture's admiration for the Lone Ranger type of leader who can do it all.
 *my experiences with super-gifted leaders who made no room for others to be "trained for the work of ministry"
 *"one another" used 87X's in N.T.: illustrates that the church is designed to be a body not a group of spectators following a "celebrity-leader"
2. Our motive for making disciples should be love **John 13:35**.
 - A love for God and His purposes to be fulfilled **John 21:15**
 - A love for God's people to find their God given purpose and walk in it fruitfully **John 15:8,16; 2 Tim. 2:2; 1 John 3,4**
3. Making disciples should be intentional, purposed and well planned but not necessarily a program.
 *this way seem like an oxymoron or mutually exclusive but it is not too often we lean upon a program and miss the most life transforming dynamic needed to make an authentic disciple-relationship! Remember, all ministry flows from relationship

- So much easier to transmit information or knowledge than to get involved personally with people – Hallelujah God did not see it this way! **John 3:16**.
4. Primary purpose of discipleship is not uniformity (cloning!) but multiplication for the harvest **Matt 24:14**.
 - Principle of a catch, disciple, **RELEASE!**
 - Discipleship not about control
 - *Kingdom of God mentality vs. kingdom of me
 5. Primary focus of making disciples is not teaching in a classroom, but ‘a life process’ of leading them to be followers of Jesus obeying Him in all things as they walk with you in relationship. Some revealing questions to ask ourselves:
 - How much do you love and care for your people?
 - Name 3 most life shaping sermons vs. naming 3 most life shaping relationships. Which can you remember the most?
 6. Are you still a “disciple in process”?
 - Discipleship is a lifetime long process **Phil. 3:12-14**
 7. Modelling is a primary teacher in discipling process
 - “Do what I say not what I do” does not work well at home, on the job, or in any relationship. Did not work well in Jesus’ day
 - **Matt 23:1-5,15**,
so why do we think it will work in the church?!
 - **Heb. 13:17** “Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the words of God to you, whose faith you follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.” See also **Jhn 13:15; 1 Cor. 4:15-16,11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1Tim 4:12; Titus 2:1,7-8; 2Tim 3:10-11; Heb. 6:12; 1 Pet.2:21; 3Jhn 11**.
- B. Some general challenges to Disciple-making
1. People not being motivated to become a disciple
 - Needs a clear, but not condemning, message from leadership that discipleship is not really an option
 2. Discipleship, or what it means to be a disciple, not clearly defined or misidentified
 - Need to clarify the purpose of becoming a disciple who makes disciples
 - Becoming a ‘disciple who makes disciples’ is not an automatic process but a definitive, long term choice that is more about life transformation than memorizing a body of knowledge
 3. No one is there to help, lead, guide or model
 - Problem of time, busy schedules
 - Problem of non-biblical models for both church and leadership
 4. Mis-focus upon only doing the work
 - The problem of mules – strong, smart, trainable, but sterile!
 - **2Tim 2:2** = 5 groups-multiple generations of disciples making disciples

- We will often make disciples but it is often just to get our work done and it does not go into the most critical phase of disciples who make disciples.

*if our disciples are not making disciples we risk long term failure in fulfilling the Great Commission and hastening the return of Christ
Matt. 24:14.

C. Authentic Discipleship requires:

1. Personal revelation
 - At salvation **Matt. 16:17, John 3:1-8**
 - But also lifelong in spiritual development **Eph. 1:17-20**
2. Personal relationship
 - Goes beyond classroom or sanctuary
 - Impact of Jesus' life **Mark 3:14> Acts 4:13**
 - Impact of Paul's life **Acts 20:17-38**
3. Personal resolve
 - a. On the part of the leader to disciple any and all that he can knowing that he prepares them for:
 - A lifetime of discipling others
 - Their potential departure to make disciples elsewhere
*We pastors don't like it when we have worked hard to disciple someone, only to have them tell us that they are going to be moving away. But we are making disciples for *JESUS and His Kingdom*-not for ourselves!
 - b. On the part of the disciple to enter into the lifelong adventure of:
 - Being a disciple committed to living for Christ, learning Christ and being transformed into the image of Christ
 - Making other disciples everywhere who in turn make more disciples.

III. What Does An Authentic Disciple Look Like?

* Just like Jesus! **Luke 6:40**

* Just as there are some indispensable non-negotiable characteristics of any true New Testament church, so there are indispensable non-negotiable characteristics in the Scriptures for an Authentic Disciple.

1. New Testament love being a primary motivator, influencer and shaper of character **John 13:34-34; 1Cor. 13**
2. Pre-eminence of the Holy Spirit's presence, power (manifestation) and leadership in all parts of the disciple's life and ministry **Acts, 1Cor. 4:20**
3. Ongoing transformation of character, lifestyle to be more like Christ **Rom. 8:29; 2Cor. 3:18**

* This cannot be passive or assumed-should be actively pursued and embraced as a key part of the Authentic Disciples life. But this is not about an obsession with perfect performance but rather about maturity and a positive attitude toward growth.

4. Attitude of consistently seeking to be a learner in the Word and then consistently applying what is revealed in how you live **1Tim 4:12-16**
* Learning to feed yourself- the disciple is not a spectator in his spiritual development nor does he expect others to be his source of spiritual food
*WWJD should always result in NYDI! the answer to “What Would Jesus Do?” should lead to “**Now You Do It!**”
5. Priority of Biblical relationships at every level **Matt. 5:23-24; 1John 4:20**
 - With the Triune God
 - With personal family
 - With the family of God
 - With the lost of this world
6. ***All ministry flows from relationship**: first with the Lord then with other people
Proactive and intentional pursuit of relationships for the purpose of making disciples **Matt. 28:19, 2Tim 2:2**
* begins with evangelism and should naturally super-naturally move toward relational discipling.
7. A heart for the world to serve in some capacity, especially cross-culturally **John 3:16; Matt. 20:28; 2Cor. 5:20**
*To reduce this even further:
An Authentic Disciple is a ...
 - Learner
 - Imitator
 - Follower
 - Reproducer



Authentic Disciples

Chapter 5 Disciples of Jesus The 12 and Counting



REV. OSCAR NUNCIO
Sarasota, FL

DISCIPLES OF JESUS - THE 12 AND COUNTING

Rev Oscar Nuncio
HPIM Events Coordinator, Sarasota, Florida

As the Christian church moves forward, the need for stronger, faithful and well-prepared leaders (disciples) is a must. Our theme this year is called "Authentic Disciples"

Authentic means: Accurate, authoritative, convincing, credible, pure, certain, legitimate, original, reliable, true, trustworthy, for real, dependable, faithful, veritable.

Disciple means: learner, follower, student, one who embraces and assists in spreading the teachings of another.

To say that a disciple is just a learner is a very basic definition. The New Testament gives us a more dynamic definition of a disciple.

To be a disciple is to be called to make new disciples. Throughout the New Testament, the term "disciple" is a dynamic concept. It implies multiplication.

A DISCIPLE IS A MULTIPLIER

Authentic Disciples are not merely learners but fruit-bearing disciple-makers; they multiply themselves. Take for example the parable of the soils in the gospel of Matthew. Here we see that a disciple is more than just a learner.

Matthew 13:23 says, "**He indeed bears fruit and yields**, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty." A disciple by nature is a multiplier.

The Parable of the Sower Explained – Matthew 13:18-23

*"Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. 20 But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. 22 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23 But he who received seed on the good ground is **he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces:** some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."*

John 15:8 *"My Father is honored by this, that **you bear much fruit** and show that you are my disciples."*

A disciple learns by hearing his Master and doing like his Master. This is explicitly commanded by Jesus in **John 13:13-15** "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set an example that you should do as I have done for you" **Jesus is saying to His disciples, do this to many more, multiply.**

Jesus goes on by saying in **John 15:16**, *"You did not choose me, But I chose you to **go and bear fruit**".* Again, disciples are not merely learners but fruit-bearing disciple-makers; they multiply themselves.

The Great Commission is an invitation to all nations to do this mission. In **Matthew 28:19-20** the command is "make disciples." **Multiply.**

Jesus had many disciples of different trades and professions. Some were fishermen; others tax collectors, politicians, businessmen, doctors etc...

JESUS DISCIPLES

Many of His disciples believed that He was the Christ and followed Him (**John 6:67-70**) while others deserted Him (**John 6:60-66**) and even betrayed Him (**John 12:4-5**).

During His ministry, Jesus had two kinds of disciples, the authentic and non-authentic. We already saw the definition of authentic but let's see the definition for non-authentic.

Non-Authentic

Corrupt, doubtful, false, invalid, incredible, unreliable, untrustworthy, counterfeit, fake, falsified, unauthorized, unreal, and fraudulent.

In **John 12:4-5** Jesus encountered this experience with Judas Iscariot, His disciple.

"But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said,⁵ 'Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii^[b] and given to the poor?'⁶ This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it."

Judas was a disciple but not an authentic one. He was a betrayer, a liar, a thief.

Mark 14:10

*"Then **Judas** Iscariot, who was one of the Twelve [apostles], went off to the chief priests in order to betray and hand Him over to them."*

Judas was the treasurer of the twelve disciples and ultimately greed was the motivation for the betrayal. The other disciples witnessed his behavior and also how his life ended.

Later on, as the disciples regrouped, they began to make disciples also. Peter encountered a similar experience with two of his disciples, Ananias and Sapphira.

Acts 5:3 *But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart that you should lie to and attempt to deceive the Holy Spirit, and should [in violation of your promise] withdraw secretly and appropriate to your own use part of the price from the sale of the land?*

It is evident that Ananias and Sapphira were numbered among the disciples; and there is no reason to doubt that they were an integral part of the Church at that time. Why then did Ananias and Sapphira lie and rob God? They also fell victim to greed. Their hearts became corrupted and doubtful. They became counterfeit or non-authentic disciples.

Jesus said in **Matthew 7:21-23**

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"

Apart from the original twelve disciples (apostles), Jesus prepared the seventy disciples (Luke 10:1-23). Clearly The Lord Jesus empowered them and gave them authority (authenticity) to heal the sick and cast out demons. Probably out of the "seventy" came Mark and Luke since according to the Gospels they wrote, they personally knew Jesus. Many of these disciples went out and preached the Kingdom of God like Andronicus and Junia. These two disciples were an early Christian couple mentioned by the Apostle Paul: "Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me: they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.**" (Romans 16:7)**

We read of others like **Priscilla and Aquila**. The Apostle Paul met Aquila (**Acts 18:1-3**), converting and baptizing his household. Priscilla and Aquila are described as: "by occupation they were tentmakers" and Paul is said to have worked with them in Corinth (**Acts 18:3**). Paul continued to live with Priscilla and Aquila and remained there for a good while (**Acts 18:18**),

Apollos was a Jewish Christian. An educated man and well versed in the scriptures, he had been instructed in the way of The Lord. **Acts 18:24-28**. An authentic disciple.

Barnabas was a Levite from the country of *Cyprus*. born with the given name, Joseph. He was an early Christian convert, His name is taken to mean "son of encouragement" (**Acts 4:36-37**). Barnabas was one of the first disciples that went to Antioch along with the "prophets and teachers" assigned there (**Acts 13:1**).

Silas was a leading member of the early Christian community and probably one of the original "Seventy" disciples. He was also among the men and brethren from the church at the Jerusalem Council (**Acts 15:22**) who, along with Judas called Barsabbas (the alternate candidate to replace Judas as the 12th Apostle), accompanied Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch to deliver the letter to the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch.

Timothy was younger than many of the other disciples (**1 Timothy 4:12-14**), he had already been ministering in Asia Minor and was held in high esteem with the brethren of the church. He met up with *Silas* and the *Apostle Paul* at *Lystra* during Paul's second missionary journey.

Titus was present with Paul and Barnabas at *Antioch* and later accompanied them to the *Council of Jerusalem* for the debate over the problems with the church doctrine pertaining to Gentiles. (**Galatians 2:1-3**). As we can see, the character of these men and women can be defined as authentic disciples.

JESUS' DISCIPLES OF INFLUENCE

Jesus Himself discipled people of influence; those involved in key professions who were influential in their communities. Also, those in government positions, financial systems, military and religious leaders. Each of them were as important to Jesus as the other disciples. He taught them the same Kingdom principles; The Gospel of the

Kingdom of God (**Matthew 24:14**) to avoid any confusion among those who had accepted Him in the past and those in the future who would accept Him as Lord and Savior. His message never changed.

Remember that disciples are chosen by Jesus (**John 15:16**). When He chooses one, He makes the invitation "Follow me".

LEVI

Luke 5:27-32 *"After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, **'Follow Me.'** So he left all, rose up, and followed Him".*

Jesus said to Levi, follow me, and Levi followed Him. The Word says that Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. Levi invited his friends. Who were his friends? **Luke 5:29** says *"And there were a great number of tax collectors."* Jesus had a purpose. If He saved the soul of a tax collector and taught him Kingdom principles, that person would influence others in the Tax Collector's Department (Treasury Department).

ZACCHAEUS

Luke 19:1-10 *"Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was **a chief tax collector**, and he was rich".* The first ten verses speak of the encounter Jesus had with Zacchaeus. For sure Levi and Zacchaeus had talked about Jesus as they worked in the same office and Zacchaeus was Levi's boss. For sure Zacchaeus was curious to meet Jesus. In **Luke 19: 9-10** Jesus said to him, *"Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."* From verse **11 to 27** Jesus teaches Zacchaeus Kingdom principles; specifically, financial principles. Zacchaeus was a rich man and Jesus takes the opportunity to talk about finances. Read **Luke 19:11-27**

NICODEMUS

He was an important man among the Jews, he was a teacher of religion but he did not know Jesus. "There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and asked Jesus to teach him. **John 3:1-2** *"Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.'"* **John 3:1-10 - John 7:50-51 - John 19:38-41.** In the first verses of **John 3:1 to 10**, Jesus establishes the need to be born again. Nicodemus wanted to know more about Jesus, but because of his important position as a ruler of the Jews, he was fearful of repercussions and looked for Jesus at night. Jesus recognized that influential people often needed to be instructed at night as we will further see.. In **John 7:50-51** Nicodemus tries to defend Jesus. **John 19:38-41** Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea came to rescue Jesus' body and bury him.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA

He was prepared and disciplined by Jesus himself. Joseph was a lawyer, businessman and politician. He was a man of influence. He was a member of the Sanhedrin, the supreme court of the Jews (The Sanhedrin functioned as a judicial body). He was a

Decurion in the Roman Empire, (Decurion was a member of a city senate). Decurion's were the most powerful political figures at the local level. They were responsible for public contracts, religious rituals, entertainment, and ensuring order. Perhaps most importantly to the imperial government, they also supervised local tax collection. He was in charge of the operations of lead and tin. A "rich man" **Matthew 27:57-58**, a "distinguished" man **Mark 15: 43** a "Good and honest person," **Luke 23:50-56** a "disciple of Jesus" **Matthew 27:57-58**, a "clandestine disciple" **John 19:38** "being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews". Remember Cornelius? He looked for Jesus at night. Some criticized this action but Jesus realized that Cornelius, as well as Joseph of Arimathea, both men of influence, needed to be discipled at night.

Mark 15:43-47 says that Joseph of Arimathea was a prominent council member, who was himself **waiting for the kingdom of God**. Recognizing and understanding what had just occurred at the Crucifixion; he courageously went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, both being disciples of Jesus.

Jesus had clandestinely prepared these disciples with government influence for the difficult times that He would experience on the cross. Jesus knew that none of the 12 disciples had the influence to rescue Him from the cross. But these men of influence were able to accomplish what had been written and prophesied so many years before.

It is abundantly clear that The Gospel of the Kingdom of God, as taught by Jesus himself, was meant for everyone, no exceptions (**Acts 10:34-48**). But He also demonstrated the importance of reaching influential persons who have the power to bring about change. As disciples of Christ, we must be available to minister at all times, in secret if necessary, and gain the trust of our leaders. Respecting the environment in which they work and encouraging ourselves and our congregations to pray for them and their families can bring about Kingdom changes. Billy Graham is a good example of a minister of the Gospel who had access to almost every US President during his lifetime, irrespective of political affiliations. He prayed and spiritually guided them during their administrations. To make disciples is not an option but a commandment ... to take The Gospel of the Kingdom of God to all Nations. Amen.



Authentic Disciples

Chapter 6 Building Blocks In the Life of a Disciple



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BUILDING BLOCKS IN THE LIFE OF A DISCIPLE

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We live and minister by Judeo Christian principles and many of our customs and traditions are from what has been written and spoken before, during and after Christ Jesus returned to the Father. Jesus gathered disciples in a unique way, and He left for us, in scripture, examples of making disciples by Jewish tradition and how He called disciples using Kingdom principles.

Jesus's ministry was generally centered in the region of Galilee; Capernaum, Bethsaida, Korazin and a city not far from Galilee called Scythopolis...15 miles from Nazareth. Scythopolis was a city of Roman – Greek architecture with arenas, theaters, temples, and places of higher learning. From these schools the Rabbis would look for those to disciple, the best of the best.

Jesus did not find a single disciple among those where the Jewish religious leaders looked. Let's consider where and who He sought as His disciples. Jesus went to one of the simplest of places, Bethsaida, a small fishing village of perhaps 8 families; 60 or 80 people. There were 5 boys who grew up in this village; Peter, James, John, Philip and Andrew. We know these 5 were among those who became His disciples. Each of the 5 came from this simple village; not extraordinary in any way. Why did Jesus look in such a simple, ordinary place rather than in the great institutes of learning and culture?

What does it mean to come under a Rabbi's discipleship ... and how do you find a Rabbi to follow?

In Jewish life one of the building blocks and characteristics of discipleship was accomplished through community. A student lived in close relationship with his teacher. They ate, traveled, lived together, and the student did whatever the teacher was doing. They spent their whole lives in this type of community. It was a natural way for them to live. However, not every boy living in such a community became a disciple.

Normally each village had a Synagogue and much of life was inter-woven with the activities of the Synagogue. It was their place of worship, social life, and teaching. It was the place where the word of God was kept. The most important building block in the life of a disciple is God's word. The community would gather at the Synagogue to hear God's word and listen to the Rabbi interpret His word. During His years of ministry Jesus taught in many of the Synagogues in the region of Galilee.

In the Jewish tradition, not everyone who knew scripture would become a disciple. The Synagogue provided schooling for both boys and girls. The children attended the Synagogue school and learned to read, write and recite from the Torah; the first 5 books of the Bible. They finished schooling at age 13-14, most then became part of their family's trade.

However, there would be a few seen to have the ability to move on to the next level of learning. These were young men showing passion and ability to go deeper into the Torah and study of the scriptures. Then out of that group of gifted students would be an exceptional few that would go even further and desire to become a disciple.

In our understanding as Christians, a disciple is someone who wants to know what the teacher knows. But in the Jewish world, the world of Jesus, a disciple sought much more. He not only wanted to know what the teacher knew, he wanted to be just like the teacher ... he wanted to become the teacher. Their desire ran much deeper than just learning scriptures. It was a deep passion and commitment to be with their Rabbi continually, so they could become just like him. It was a consuming passion in their lives.

Let us each ask ourselves, “Do I have the passion to be a disciple of Jesus, in the true biblical sense? Is there a Fire in my innermost being that is willing to pursue my Teacher, to be just like my Teacher ... to become my Teacher? To literally be one with Christ first? {I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. Gal 2:20} This is the life of an Authentic Disciple of Jesus Christ!

In Jewish tradition those with that passion to be a disciple were required to find a Rabbi who would accept them as their disciple. If they measured up to the Rabbi's qualifications, and he saw they had the desire and knowledge, he might invite them to follow him for a while; to see if they had what it took to be like him. In reality during this process most were turned down. This was because the requirement was absolute total commitment. If they were accepted by their Rabbi, it took many years before the Rabbi would say to them, “You are ready, now go and make your own disciples”

How did Jesus produce disciples? He did not wait for them to ask Him if they could follow Him ... He went into the most ordinary places, found the simplest of men, and quietly asked them to come ... “be a disciple ... come Follow Me”

The men that Jesus called were not from the great schools of learning, not those who went on to higher learning. They weren't looking for position, they were not expecting it ... they were just good men who loved God and knew how to live a good life in their community. They did not memorize all of the Torah or the Book of the Prophets; they did not debate the books of the Torah with the Rabbis. They weren't considered among the best of the best, but Jesus said, “I'm looking for another quality than what is in your head. Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men ... I think you could be like Me!!!” He chose them Because He believed in them. Has someone in your life believed in you?

There is Someone who says to you, “I don't hold your past as a prerequisite for your future...” Jesus found you, and He said “I believe you could be like me I believe in you ... I know you ... I can see in you the character and heart to be like Me.

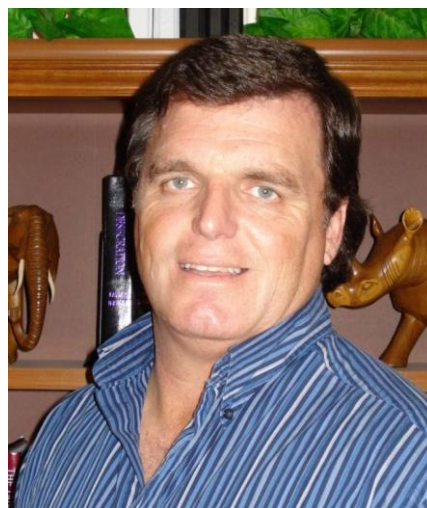
You can complete seminary, and walk away saying, “I can't do this ...” But you can't know Christ and walk away from Him, the One Who says that He believes in you! This is an awesome truth ... you have been chosen. Think what that means for you ... He

sees something in you worth investing His life into! Are you a student of your Teacher Jesus Christ? In your heart confess and believe that He has not made an error in choosing you.



Authentic Disciples

Chapter 7 What is an Authentic Disciple?



REV. RANDY THURMAN
Boone, NC

WHAT IS AN AUTHENTIC DISCIPLE?

Rev Randy Thurman
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The subject of discipleship is a very necessary one in our day. Especially considering how little we hear about it in our modern gospel preaching. I have purposely not read or listened to any of my esteemed colleagues' thoughts on this subject lately, in the hope that I can add some fresh insights to the work.

To begin I want to suggest something I believe does not constitute authentic discipleship. Discipleship is not cloning. We are all individuals and God made us to be divine originals. The idea that we somehow all have to be the same, and have the same desires, to be disciples is not only wrong but is actually impossible in my estimation. In considering this I thought about God's covenant sign to Noah; the rainbow. A rainbow has all different, very individual colors, yet they blend and conform to each other by reaching toward the same destiny. In the same way we become Authentic Disciples by being the best originals that we can be. Then we conform to each other through our desire to portray Christ, through our own uniqueness.

One of the great hindrances to this is when we compare ourselves among ourselves. Paul tells the church in Corinth that they are "not wise" for doing this. Father, in His mercy, created each of us with our own unique personalities and I for one am thankful for that. It would be a miserable world if we all tried to be the same. So let's consider for a moment what we call the Great Commission in the New Testament.

There are two accounts in the gospels. In Mk 16 we find the admonition *to go into all the world and preach the gospel in order to convert the sinner*, where as in Mt 28 we are told to *go into all the world and teach in order to make disciples*. So believers are *born* but disciples are *MADE*. In other words discipleship is not an automatic thing and one is only a true disciple because he chooses to be made one.

Recently I heard a rather popular song and they were singing, thank you Jesus for, "carrying my cross". That is not a true statement and as a matter of fact it points out one of the errors in our modern Christian movements. Jesus carried *His* cross, not mine and in fact He cannot carry mine. Only I can carry *my* cross. This, my friends is at the very heart of discipleship! The scripture says in Mt 16:24 – Then Jesus said to His followers *"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."* There are two obvious things we can see from this passage; one is that there is a calling to discipleship, which means a choice has to be made. The second is that once a person embarks upon the journey of discipleship they *must* take up *their* own cross and follow Him.

It is the cross then that is the necessary tool to *make* the disciple. In other words, God cannot make you into a disciple without the use of a cross. That is why Jesus says that a person cannot be His disciple without it. It is not that He is trying to exclude people but He knows that there is only one way to make a disciple. They must choose to give up themselves and choose to take this cross!

So let me try to help answer the question “what is an Authentic Disciple?” I want us to consider two concepts which come to mind immediately; a disciple is a learner and also is following a discipline. I was taught as a young Christian the importance of maintaining a teachable spirit, or as my father would say, “Don’t get too big for your britches, boy.” The disciple must submit to the learning process if they are to go on in the things of God.

Furthermore, it will take time and patience. It is not instantaneous; which is the reason I think many ministers find discipleship an unpopular message to preach. However, if we pursue it with diligence, it will become the message that bears fruit that is consistent with the will of God. The truth is, we need much more teaching about this subject if we are to see the body of Christ come into her rightful place of maturity in our times.

Concerning being a learner, there’s an interesting and intriguing verse in 1 Cor 8:2 – *“If anyone thinks he knows anything, he does not yet know it as he ought to know it.”* Paul suggests that to really know something we must go beyond our own thoughts about it. One translation says if anyone imagines he knows... so to really know discipleship there is a teaching process.

Again in Mt 28 - Jesus said ...” *make disciples teaching them to observe all that I taught you*” Here is the second concept. The first is the teaching, the other is the observation; the discipline of doing it. I have heard people say, “but didn’t Jesus already do it all for me? Isn’t it all by the grace of God now? After all He did a complete work on Calvary so I just have to believe and it’s done, right?” I will answer that with another question; didn’t Jesus know that He was going to the cross, and the reason for going to the cross, when He made those statements about being His disciple? The truth is, a man can get all the way from earth to heaven on the merit of Jesus’s work at Calvary, but when he gets there he may not be a disciple. Salvation is a free gift to all who believe on Jesus Christ, but becoming a disciple is a different matter altogether. His cross gave me freedom from sin, disease and defeat. But my cross will shape me into a person who represents the loving spirit and character of Christ. “A disciple is not above his teacher, it is enough that he is like His teacher.” May we all be those who live as Authentic Disciples so that we in turn lead others into such a joyous path!



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