

Making Fishers of Men & Women

The Well Church Ministries

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1 Introduction

Discipleship means different things to different people. In today's message I want us look at the Bible's definition of "Discipleship" and encourage each of us to see how well our lives line up with the Bible's definition. Discipleship is the center of what we do as a church.

2 Disciple

What does it mean to you to be a disciple?

How many feel that they are living out discipleship?

What is the Great commission?

Let's read it together (**Matthew 28:18-20**):

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
(N.I.V.)

This is the commission that Jesus gave to the church. There are three specific things Jesus instructed the church to do:

- (1) Make Converts – "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of The Son and of the Holy Spirit"
- (2) Make Disciples – "Make disciples of all nations"
- (3) Teach – "Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you".

This is actually a process: First we are to be saved, then we are to submit to discipleship and teaching and lastly we are to dedicate ourselves to discipling others.

The Goal is to reach a spiritual maturity in which we grow to deny ourselves, pick up our crosses and follow Christ.

3 Maturity Is The Goal

Let's look at **Ephesians 4:11-20**

11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

The job of the church leaders is to equip. We equip so that everyone is prepared for works of service. We do this until we all reach unity in faith and in knowledge.

4 Spheres of Spiritual Growth As Disciples

We have to make a personal dedication to devote ourselves to the Lord's service. This means a whole lot more than coming to church on Sunday's, but that is a good start.

4.1 Our Relationship With God

The first thing we have to do in order to obtain this maturity is develop our own personal relationship with God. You have to make it a priority in your life. No one can do this for you. It requires dedication and a willingness from you to build your relationship with the King of Kings.

When our relationship with God is strong, then we can understand His will for our lives and be guided in our relationships with others.

When asked the greatest command, Jesus said:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:35, N.I.V.)

To measure how strong your relationship with God is, ask yourself the following questions:

- (1) How much time do I dedicate to my prayer life?
- (2) How much time do I spend alone reading God's Word?
- (3) How many times do I turn to God first when making decisions?

I bet if we are all honest and we add up the time, it is very difficult for us to say that we are "Loving God with all your heart and with all our soul and with all our mind".

This is the first area of growth in which we must focus and dedicate our hearts and minds to if we want to become mature disciples.

4.2 Our Relationships Within The Church

The next area that we need to focus on in our spiritual growth as disciples is our relationships within the church.

We just talked about the Greatest Commandment; the second that Jesus gave was this:

'Love your neighbor as yourself' (Matthew 22:39, N.I.V.)

When Paul was speaking to the Ephesians, his goal for spiritual growth was for the church to grow in unity. Now this doesn't mean we have to agree with each other on all accounts, but what it does mean is that we are united in our faith and our dedication to serving the Lord and fulfilling His purpose for our lives.

Lets turn to **Acts 2:42-47**

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the

people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

This church understood unity. They ate together, they played together, they prayed together.

They made it a priority to develop strong relationships with other believers. This was and is the design of the church body. Strong relationships cannot be developed on just Sundays. We should all make an effort to develop relationships with each person in this church.

4.3 Our Relationships Outside of The Church

Finally, our relationships outside of the church are as important. As we mature in our Christian walk, our lives should not reflect a dual personality. Our lives should bare fruit each and every day of our lives. Our testimonies, our love for others, must grow beyond the church body.

Jesus said in **Mark 2:17,**

"I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners".

Let's look at Jesus' prayer just before he was arrested and crucified.

John 17:15-23 (N.I.V.)

15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.

17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. 18

As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into

the world. 19 For them I sanctify myself, that they

too may be truly sanctified.

Jesus Prays for All Believers

20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,

21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you

are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so

that the world may believe that you have sent me.

22 I have given them the glory that you gave me,

that they may be one as we are one— 23 I in them

and you in me—so that they may be brought to

complete unity. Then the world will know that you

sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Jesus is saying that by our unity with God and our unity in the church, the world will know that Jesus is the Messiah and that God's love will be seen through us.

5 Conclusion

Every disciple should be developing three categories of relationships:

- (1) Personal relationship with God
- (2) Relationships with the church
- (3) Relationships outside of the church

Challenge:

Pray and think about the following:

How can I improve my relationship with God?

How can I develop deeper relationships within the church?

How can I demonstrate my love for Christ outside of church?