

THE DISCIPLEMAKING FOUR



THE ULTIMATE QUESTION

**Are we making
real disciples?**

Jesus ignited our movement with this final command:

*Go make Disciples!
And teach them
to Obey!*

*On a journey
together! But if
we're not making
disciples, what
are we doing?*

**So are we making
disciples who Go?**

Here's the Proposal:

If we really want to be all that God intends for us to be, then let's step back and look at what we're doing. Don't be afraid to change what needs to be changed, in your church, in your ministry and especially in your own life. Let's have the courage and boldness to add, subtract, rearrange and change whatever needs to be done so we are actually making disciples who go and make more disciples.

There are Four Components to Disciplemaking

- One- Be a Disciple
- Two- Go Fish for Men
- Three- Make Disciples
- Four- Multiply Disciples



Let's Walk Through the Process Together



What's a Disciple?

What has God commanded us to produce? Disciples! And what is a disciple? A disciple is a fully devoted follower who reflects the mind, the character and the priorities of Christ. It's not simply knowing- it's also being and then doing! Certainly it's critical that we know the truth and are growing in the knowledge of Christ. We also must grow in the grace of Christ as well. The summary of God's character is love. We love, from the core of our being, to the demonstration of our actions, attitudes and words. We love! This is who we are.

We love God, so we spent time getting close to Him, we get filled with His life and power, we honor and we obey Him! Why wouldn't we? Out of the overflow of His love, we love each other, so we do everything to demonstrate that heart of compassion and generosity. We love the lost- we can't help it. We're stirred to live out loud in such a way that they see Jesus in us and want to know Him too. And we love the least. We're motivated to do what we can to help those who can't help themselves.

All of this comes right out of the very heart of God, flowing through His children. As we grow up, we choose to serve Him everyday and in every way. That lifestyle of humble generosity doesn't go unnoticed. In fact, it's contagious. It multiplies!

We love! And we make disciples. This is what we do. We grow up and we then spend the rest of our lives helping others find Jesus so they can do the same thing. As a fully devoted disciple, we invest ourselves in others, helping them to first be a disciple and then make disciples. **Pass it on!**

This must be the goal of every believer, every program, every church and every denomination. Anything less than this will return us to the mediocrity that we're trying to climb out of! If this is our goal, our purpose, the very mission that God has called us to, then we evaluate everything that we do, as individuals and as a church, against this goal. We have to make disciples, who make disciples, who make disciples. We have to help our children, our young people, our older people and everyone in-between become multiplying disciples. This can't be the maybe plan or the long-term plan. **It has to be the NOW plan. NOW! Make Disciples!**

Reflection:

Are you ready for this adventure? Is there something inside of you that longs for greater purpose in your life?

As you read this introduction, what are some thoughts that are going through your mind?

What are some of the immediate changes that you think you will have to make to see this lifestyle becoming who you are?

One- Be a Disciple

You have to be a disciple before you can make a disciple. That just makes sense, but many of us don't live it. Let's look at what it looks like to be a disciple:

- 1) Personally Healthy-** You have to be spiritually healthy in your own life. You've got to be healthy if you want to help others get healthy! You need to be balanced in your life management. You need to be deeply committed to a loving community of believers. You have to be dependent on God's power for daily living. That means you've got to spend enough time with God in presence and in Word that He rubs off. The fruit of His Spirit will show up if that's actually happening, and it won't if it's not. So we commit to a life of prayer. We draw close and we stay close. And we see the results. And so does everyone else! We live a life of love because that's what it looks like when we are filled with His Spirit and His power.

Love happens. We can't help it. We naturally become patient and kind and the rest of the fruit of the Spirit show up without effort. We love! We love God. We love each other. We love the lost. We love the least. This is who we are.

A fully devoted disciple reflects a) the mind, b) the character and c) the priorities of Jesus. We reflect the mind of Christ when we walk with Him, are filled with His Spirit and have studied His Word. How can we know the heart and thoughts of God if we aren't immersing ourselves in His Word? He's given us His Word for that purpose. His Word is the revelation of the Truth for daily living. But how can we interpret His Word correctly if we aren't filled with His Spirit? People study His Word religiously and misinterpret it all the time. Others know the Word inside and out, but there's no reflection of His Word in their lives. That's just wrong!

So we draw close to God, we draw deeply into His Word and we get healthy. As we deepen our faith and grow spiritually, we look more and more like Him. And people will notice- the way we think, the way we talk, the way we walk, and the way we love. We truly reflect the generosity, the compassion, and the character of Christ.

- 2) Personally Gone Fishing-** We have to be in relationship with lost people, reflecting Jesus. Healthy believers love! And healthy believers love lost people. They can't help it. A fully devoted disciple reflects the character of Jesus. God loves lost people and He wants them found. He wants them FOUND! When God fills us with His Spirit, He fills us with His love, which is overflowing for lost people. We don't have to try to love them if we're filled with the Spirit. It happens, without effort. If it doesn't just happen, we're not filled with the Spirit. Back up to Personal Health!

God's Word and God's Spirit make a lifestyle of evangelism a top priority for every believer, young and old, for life. A fully devoted disciple reflects the priorities

of Jesus. The fields are still white and ready for harvesting, but the laborers are still few. That's because we're too busy and we've somehow missed the great commission, almost as an entire people. If you want to be a disciple, you have to get up and go fishing!

3) Personally Making Disciples- You have to make disciples to be a disciple. How can you be a disciple and not obey Jesus's last commandment to go and make disciples? That just doesn't make sense! The first step of making disciples is fishing- building friendships with people who don't yet know Christ. We then get to disciple them and help them become disciple-makers when they come to Jesus as their Savior.

We are also surrounded by believers who need to be disciplined. They attend our churches, but they've never grown up! They've filled their minds with Biblical information, but they aren't living the Truth. As children, young people and adults, they need far more than classrooms and information. They need transformation! We need to disciple and invest in them so they too disciple and invest in others the rest of their lives. Picture us in community, all working together to help each other get strong in the Lord, so we can all go out and keep on fishing for more men, women, young people and children. **Disciples making disciples making disciples! That's what a truly healthy disciple looks like and that's what a healthy church looks like too.**

Reflection:

Are you spiritually healthy personally? Do you see why that is critical?

As you read through this section, in what areas of spiritual living are you strong and in what areas do you need to be strengthened?

Describe your own life as you reflect on each of these areas of your own lifestyle- the mind, the character and the priorities of Christ.

Are you experiencing a deepening relationship with Jesus that clearly is reflected in the rest of your life?

Have you seen the overflow of your life in Christ giving you a compassionate heart to reach out to lost people around you?

What areas of compassion for the lost need to be strengthened in your life?

Have you ever personally been discipled?

Can you see why it's so important that we all become disciples who make disciples?

Two- Go Fish for Men (and Women)

Jesus made it clear to His disciples what it meant to walk with Him. "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Now, some of his disciples were fishermen, but everyone knew what He was saying. "If you choose to follow Me, we'll spend the rest of our lives throwing out nets and drawing people into My kingdom." They had watched Him do just that for a year and a half. Now they would become apprentice "fishermen", learning to love lost people toward a relationship with God. Soon, He would leave them to fish for men and women the rest of their lives.

Jesus commanded everyone of us to go and make disciples. When He commanded His disciples to teach us to obey all of His commands, the great commission was passed on to all believing generations, until He comes back for us. But we have to make converts before we can make disciples. In fact, the first step of discipling is bringing people to Jesus. We normally have to be their friends before they will even consider being His friend. So fully devoted disciples have to, first of all, be healthy and, secondly, they have to go. They have to be in intentional relationships with people who need to come to Jesus. This is the heart of God. This is why Jesus came. This is what He did and died for. Why would we do anything else?

In order to bring people toward Jesus, we usually have to plan it into our lives. We're all so busy, aren't we? Without a plan, we'll get nowhere. The only way to spend time with anyone is to shape our lives around some planned opportunities. So here are some steps to bring someone closer to an encounter with God:

- 1) **Cultivate intentional friendships with at least three people who need Jesus.** These could be neighbors, people you work with, do sports with or whom you naturally come across in the regular course of your life. Ask God to show you who to spend time with in this part of your life. Become a real friend! How can we expect to share the good news if we haven't first demonstrated that good news in our love and our lives?
- 2) **Then, at the right time, begin to plant the seeds of God's truth into your conversations in the context of a great friendship.** Once we earn the right to share, we look for appropriate opportunities to bring our life in God into that relationship.
- 3) **Introduce these friends to your Christian friends.** It always serves God's purpose to expose seekers to a number of believers in their journey toward faith. It's wonderful to do evangelism in community with other believers. Have fun together! Bring your friends to the right outreach events planned by your church.
- 4) **Finally, when the time is right, ask your friends if they're ready to commit their lives to a relationship with God.** We're not selling a product. We're guiding

our friends through a clear presentation of the gospel with an opportunity to respond to God's invitation: "Do you want Jesus?"

Building friendships with pre-believers should be done both by ourselves individually and in the context of community. As we built our friendships, it's appropriate to introduce other believers into that friendship. The power of God's Spirit working in and through God's people is amazing. Living life together as believers with our pre-believing friends can bring powerful and life-transforming results. Healthy activities and events with our church family can accelerate this process of moving toward Christ.

Reflection:

Explain what it means to have Jesus say to you: Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.

What should an intentional relationship with non-Christians look like? How much time should be spent in those relationships?

Do you have current, planned, intentional relationships with several non-Christians? Would they call you their friend?

What are some of the activities that you do with those non-Christians as you've cultivated a friendship?

What are some of the ways that you have begun to plant seeds of God's truth into their lives?

Have you provided an opportunity for these friends to spend time with any of your Christian friends? Have you brought them to any church events? Describe those situations.

Have you had the opportunity to share the gospel and pray with any of these friends? Describe that.

Have any of these friends begun to attend church or a Bible study with you?

Three- Make Disciples!

Go and make disciples! It's as simple as that. Jesus's last words started a revolution that was intended to include every believer until He returns! Go and make disciples! Reach your family. Reach your neighbor. Reach your community. Reach your nation. Reach your world, one person at a time. And then help them become disciples who live out the life of Jesus the same way you're living out the life of Jesus. We've already learned what a disciple is. A fully devoted disciple reflects the mind, the character and the priorities of Christ. It's clearly a priority of God that we make disciples.

Disciples can be made in so many ways. We grow and learn to both be and make disciples in the context of community. Reading the Word, gathering with God's people, going to Bible studies and other training activities all are intended to help shape us into authentic disciples. The problem is most of us become more and more knowledgeable about the things of God. We can learn and learn for decades. But it often stops there. Paul talks about people having the knowledge of truth but having no power. That's just one of our problems.

Disciplemaking that begins and ends with the classroom almost always falls short. That doesn't create very many fully formed disciples. That creates educated believers and a handful of self-disciplined disciples. In contrast with educated attenders, real disciples walk with God. As they draw close to God, they think more and more like Him. They demonstrate His character because the power of the Holy Spirit is at work in them. Real disciples love the church and the lost, with all their heart, because that's God's love flowing out of them. And real disciples make disciples, because that's what He commanded us to do.

So how do we make real disciples? We disciple them, one person at a time. That's the missing ingredient in the church! We assume that believers will discipline themselves to grow up and become all that God and we want them to be. But, for most believers, it doesn't work that way. There's great value in our people sitting under good preaching and instruction, but there has to be more. There has to be some plan for walking together. There has to be some sort of volunteered accountability for most believers to really grow up and become a disciplemaker themselves.

How does that work? Here are some steps:

- 1) Be a Disciplemaker.** Pick 1-3 people and begin to walk with them. You want them to reflect the mind, the character and the priorities of Jesus. Make sure you're looking like Him too. Howard Hendricks once said, "more is caught than taught." and it's true. Your words, your attitudes, character and actions will have far more power to shape your disciples than what you try to teach them. Walking with them involves time and commitment for the long run. Think of it as an apprenticeship. Plan to spend the next 10-20 years shaping each disciple and then walking together

shaping the lives of others. The early years will be more intensive. This is where the foundations are poured. Talk together about sermons and studies and classes and conversations with others.

2) Have a Plan. Walking in a discipling relationship should be both spontaneous and intentional. We should plan to spend intentional time on a regular basis. Sometimes you will spend your time just talking about what's happening in the normal flow of life. Crisis happens and it needs to be unpacked. Walking together through life is far more important than getting through a systematic discipling plan. On the other hand, it's important to have that plan so you're actually building a healthy, reproducing believer. So find something to guide you through the concepts that you want to pour into your disciple. That may be a book or content from the Internet.

Have a plan of what you would like to cover over several years. There are thirty-plus topics often found in discipling books that we want our disciples to walk in and to multiply. We want to talk about everything from spiritual disciplines, spiritual warfare and walking in the power of the Spirit to generosity, obedience and discernment, to name a few. We want living, walking, multiplying disciples who will live Christ out loud long after you are gone. Think about that!

3) Work in Community to Make Disciples. God never intended on us doing all the heavy lifting by ourselves. We were born into the family of God. We are made to live, to work and to make disciples together. We should bring our friends to small groups and classes and other gatherings so they are exposed to good Christian friendships and modeling and teaching. As a family, we should all be helping each other to grow strong in the Lord. So many new or less mature believers grow up as they are surrounded by stronger believers in settings like a small group. We should work together as stronger believers to get all the less mature believers into a community that will challenge them and help them grow up. Disciples are made, not born!

4) Real Discipling requires Accountability. The majority of believers are not growing up and making disciples themselves. Most have attended many classes and most have been in small groups. They've learned and learned and learned, but most do not grow up and multiply. While some of discipling must be done in community, ultimately, for most people, it requires a one-on-one relationship that includes some level of accountability. Someone has to be discipling and someone has to be growing into a discipling maker. **Decide to be a discipling maker. Then go and make disciples who make disciples!**

Reflect:

Most believers don't grow up! Describe the difference between an educated believer and a real disciple.

Share your thoughts on why most people need an accountable, one-on-one relationship with a disciplemaker to become an authentic disciple.

Have you ever disciplined someone? Describe that process if you have.

How hard will it be to commit yourself to take regular time in your schedule if you are going to form authentic disciples?

How do you feel about the idea of discipling people to become strong believers the rest of your life?

Will it be easier to be spontaneous or intentional as you disciple someone? How will you grow to bring balance and consistency in these areas?

Where will you look to find the right content to go through with each of the individuals that you are discipling?

How will your discipling look different with men, women or young people?

Describe how you will use the community of believers to help you as you disciple your friends.

How will you help the people you are discipling be accountable to grow strong, reach out to others and actually make disciples themselves?

Four- Multiply Disciples!

Go and multiply disciples! Is that what He meant? It has to be what He meant. If we make an authentic disciple, he or she too will make a disciple, who will make a disciple, who will make a disciple. And, if everyone obeys Jesus, that will go on and on and on. Here, again, is the problem. We have focused largely on passing on knowledge and we've overlooked passing on a repeating lifestyle. We've worked to make sure that our believers have learned their lesson, but we've ignored the need for them to actually go and make another disciple. So our process has ended with limited addition instead of unstoppable multiplication!

What would happen if we actually multiplied disciples? Often we "disciple" someone and then we leave them to their own future. We go and "disciple" someone else and do the same thing. That's addition at best. With no long-term relationship with their disciplemaker, so many believers drop back into a mediocre Christian life at best. They don't continue to grow and they clearly don't go!

Let's learn something from the experience of others. AA teaches that alcoholics need accountability for life. They always will need a sponsor to walk with them and, when they get well, they need to sponsor others for life. It's the only way to make sure they don't go backwards as alcoholics. We know that without accountability, most Christians also slide! Maybe we can learn something here.

What if we focused on actually making multiplying disciples? What would that look like? Here's an example:

We Disciple 3-		the 1st Generation
The 3 Disciple 3-	3 x 3 = 9	the 2nd Generation
The 9 Disciple 3-	9 x 3 = 27	the 3rd Generation
The 27 Disciple 3-	27 x 3 = 81	the 4th Generation

**That's 120 Disciples in
Four Generations of DISCIPLEMAKING!**

Look at this example carefully. We disciple three, and we help them disciple three, and then we help them help their disciples disciple three and we repeat that one more time. We are actually focusing on the depth of our discipling. We are now making multiplying disciples. We will probably disciple more than three people ourselves in a lifetime. But if we only disciple three and we help them reproduce our modeling out for four generations, we would have 120 disciples. **120 disciples, who are all committed to multiply!**

Imagine discipling three disciples each with a focus on reproducing for four generations. That would be amazing! Let's call this **Three-by-Four Discipling**. This is the Real **D4!** Doing this would revolutionize our churches. Now, here's our reality check- not everyone would become a disciple, not everyone would become a multiplying disciple, and not everyone would multiply for four generations. **But, if this became our standard, our baseline, our discipling strategy in our churches, it would change everything!**

Are you listening?

We have a phenomenon in our country called Multi-Level Marketing. People sell products and then find others to sell those same products with them. The goal is to get as many people selling your products as possible, so you can make as much money as possible. It's the American way! People recruit friends, family and others and teach them to recruit people who recruit more people. The real money is made if you get a "down-line" 7 generations deep. People work very hard to do well in this business. But think about using this concept for the Kingdom of God.

**Think about making Disciples FOUR Generations Deep.
There's something to get excited about.
MAKE that COMMITMENT!**

"I am committed to making multiplying disciples the rest of my life. With God's wisdom and strength, I will work to father or mother multiple generations through each disciple that God gives me to grow."

Now Let's GO!

Reflection:

If most discipling is simply the passing on of information, how will you change that and help your “apprentices” actually go and make more disciples themselves?

What will it look like if you are committed for the long term to shaping your disciples so they actually are multiplying more disciples?

What would you need from your church family in order for this to happen?

Will you make this commitment before God? “I am committed to making multiplying disciples the rest of my life. With God's wisdom and strength, I will work to father or mother multiple generations through each disciple that God gives me to grow.”

Resources

There are so many resources that can help you in your plan to make disciples. Type in the word “discipleship” on your browser and you’ll find endless sites and hundreds of books. Most of them are good. My goal is to point you to several great books and sites to get you started. The right book can get you equipped and going. Downloadable resources can be passed on over and over again. Let’s begin our journey.

WEBSITES

Core Discipleship- coregroups.org

This site is the premier location for finding a complete, long-term, disciplemaking, disciple-multiplying strategy, with free, easily reproducible, downloadable eBooks. Design your own lifestyle disciplemaking plan and use this content for your training. I highly recommend it.

Discipleship Tools- discipleshiptools.org

This site adds more good content to grab and copy for your disciplemaking plans.

BOOKS

Master Plan of Evangelism- Robert Coleman

The classic masterwork on the Master making disciples.

The Lost Art of Disciple Making! Leroy Eims

Excellent resource including 30 critical topics.

Personal Disciplemaking- Christopher Adsit

Another excellent resource for multiplying disciple makers.

Disciple- Juan Carlos Ortiz

Another classic on disciplemaking.