

AUTHENTIC

**Disciplemaking and Multiplication
For Everyone!**

Team Guide

NAME

Making Authentic Disciples



A Disciplemaking and Multiplication Team Guide For Everyone!



By Dale Edwardson

The Disciplemaking Alliance @2019

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Let's Get Started!

Welcome to a great new adventure called disciplemaking. Most of us have grown up in a world filled with education. Disciplemaking adds the ingredients of character development and actively practicing the lifestyle of our teacher, who happens to be Jesus. Let's affirm what disciplemaking is.

- **It's a journey into a whole new way of thinking and doing life.**
- **It's often done as a team, where we learn from someone and help each other grow. We pray, laugh, cry, share our joys and sorrows and do mission together.**
- **It's not just about knowing things; it's about us changing to be everything that God wants us to be.**
- **It requires surrender, transparency and authenticity, and it stretches all of us in these areas.**
- **It takes a full commitment to grow up and become an authentic disciple.**
- **It impacts how we think, feel, and respond to everything around us.**
- **In the end, it multiplies. We pass it on, the rest of our lives!**

These observations are just a summary of the many components that we will learn together as we do our journey. One of the keys to becoming a fully devoted, developing disciple of Jesus is authenticity. A child can learn and imitate a parent or teacher without truly buying in to the truths and principles that they are acting on. They may be simply acting. That's why many young adults rebel against the lifestyle that they've inherited.



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As disciples of Jesus, it's critical that we take the time to fully immerse ourselves in His lifestyle. That means we have to want to shed the old ways of living that don't represent our new life in Christ. And we need to use all of our strength to learn to be like Jesus, in mind, character and priorities! No faking. Complete honesty. Willing to become transparent with trusted friends, knowing that that will lead to victory, freedom and power. Transparent in failures and transparent in victories! That authenticity will make us strong together, and it will help us set others free the rest of our lives!

Some starting questions: Why is authenticity such an important part of being a disciple of Jesus? What do we look like when we're not authentic? How difficult is it to be authentic?

This Guide

The purpose of this guide is to help point you in the right direction. Use it to start the conversation. Talk and walk through each section together so you all get on the same page in purpose, vision and commitment.

- **Our Journey, Objectives and Plan** are meant to introduce you to the concept of what discipling is.
- **What is a Discipleship Team and Commitment?** unpacks how we will come together as a team to grow up and become authentic disciples. We'll use some charts that will help us look more closely at ourselves. You will want to keep going back to those charts as a way to check your progress and growth.
- **The Team Gathering Planner- How to Use It** will help us balance our time together in four important areas of communication and content.
- **Team Essentials For Discipling** is a one to two month study that you will do to help you understand what are the most important components of teaming together to grow up as godly disciples.



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- **What is a Disciple?** is a month-long foundational team discussion on what an authentic disciple of Jesus actually looks, thinks and acts like.

Talk and walk carefully through each study so everyone has a clear picture of where we are going and what we want to accomplish. Take your time. The goal will always be formation over information. All of this will give us a solid foundation before we move on with our study content.

- **Our Content and Key Topics** section will help you discover the right material to work through over the next twelve to twenty-four months.
- **Are any of you struggling with questions on time management and how you are going to be able to bring healthy balance to your many obligations?** Read **Time- How do We Find It?** a section that will help you think through how to deal with this important question.
- **Resources** will point you to other tools, products and websites that will help you in your journey of discipleship. The very best selection of resources will always be found on our website.
- **Ready to Multiply!** is your graduation document. You will be ready to make your own disciples at the end of our time together.



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Our Journey

Jesus wants all of us to become authentic disciples, and then He wants all of us to help others become authentic disciples the rest of our lives. That sounds like a big assignment, but let's look at Jesus's last words in Matthew 28:19-20:

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Jesus showed His disciples what it meant to be a disciple and then commanded them to pass it on. They were meant to multiply, not just information, but an entire way of living! So our goal is to grow up and become reflectors of the life of Christ, influencers of everyone we touch and multipliers of disciples who make even more disciples. This was His plan from the beginning.

Why is it so important that we all first grow up spiritually and then choose to make disciples the rest of our lives?

The Journey Map

God has given us a beautiful map pointing us to maturity in Jesus and the priorities of purposeful and missional living. We call it the Bible, God's Word. We want to dive in and dig through all of those sixty-six books and wonderful chapters to learn everything that we can so we know the mind and heart of God. God wants us to develop an insatiable hunger for His truth. We also can categorize the themes and topics that come up over and over again throughout the Word as another way to explore and understand the ways of our Father. We'll look at several lists to help us know that we haven't missed any critical truths from God.

Take a few minutes to look at The Journey Map. Use the map to assess what you've learned and what you've missed on your journey with God.

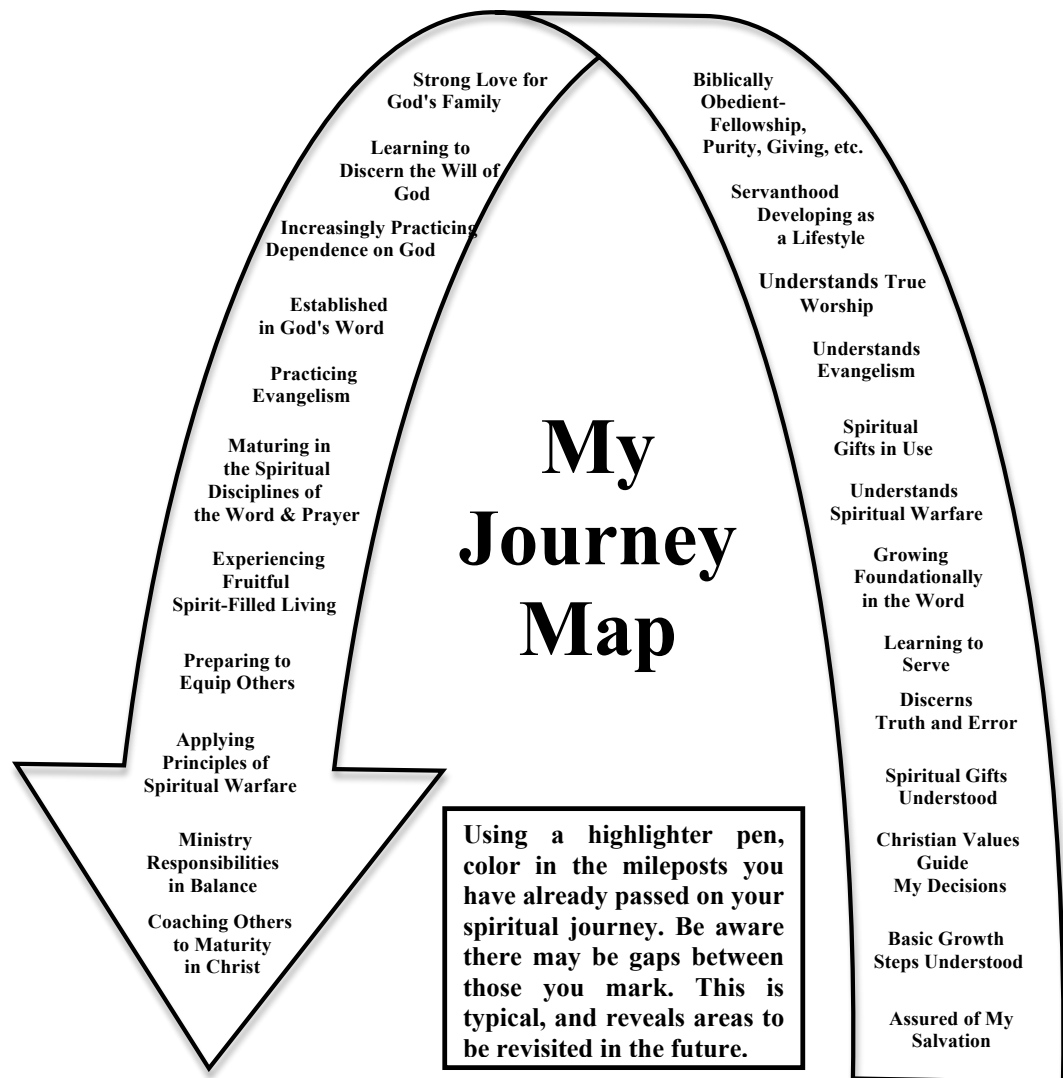


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" Go therefore and MAKE DISCIPLES ... "



...Who Make Disciples Who Make..."



Our Disciplemaking Objectives

Let's talk about our objectives in our time together. We want to reflect the mind, character and priorities of Jesus. If that is what we want to look like when we complete our initial objectives, then we need to look at that goal and look in the mirror, over and over again! **Let's start with the diagram on the next page. We'll go into more depth later.**

Talk together about each of the four areas that make up the balance of our spiritual life. Look at each of the summaries of our four objectives.

Unpack how the words in the grey areas describe the four main objectives that we want in our lives?

How is it possible that we reflect Jesus?

What do you think it means to have the mind of Christ?

Why are these qualities of character so important in the life of an authentic disciple?

Would Jesus expect all of us to do all of His priorities all the time?

When you finish talking about the life objectives, walk through the timeline on the bottom of the page to understand our objectives as we go through our journey together. Talk about the process and the End-Goal that God wants to achieve in us.

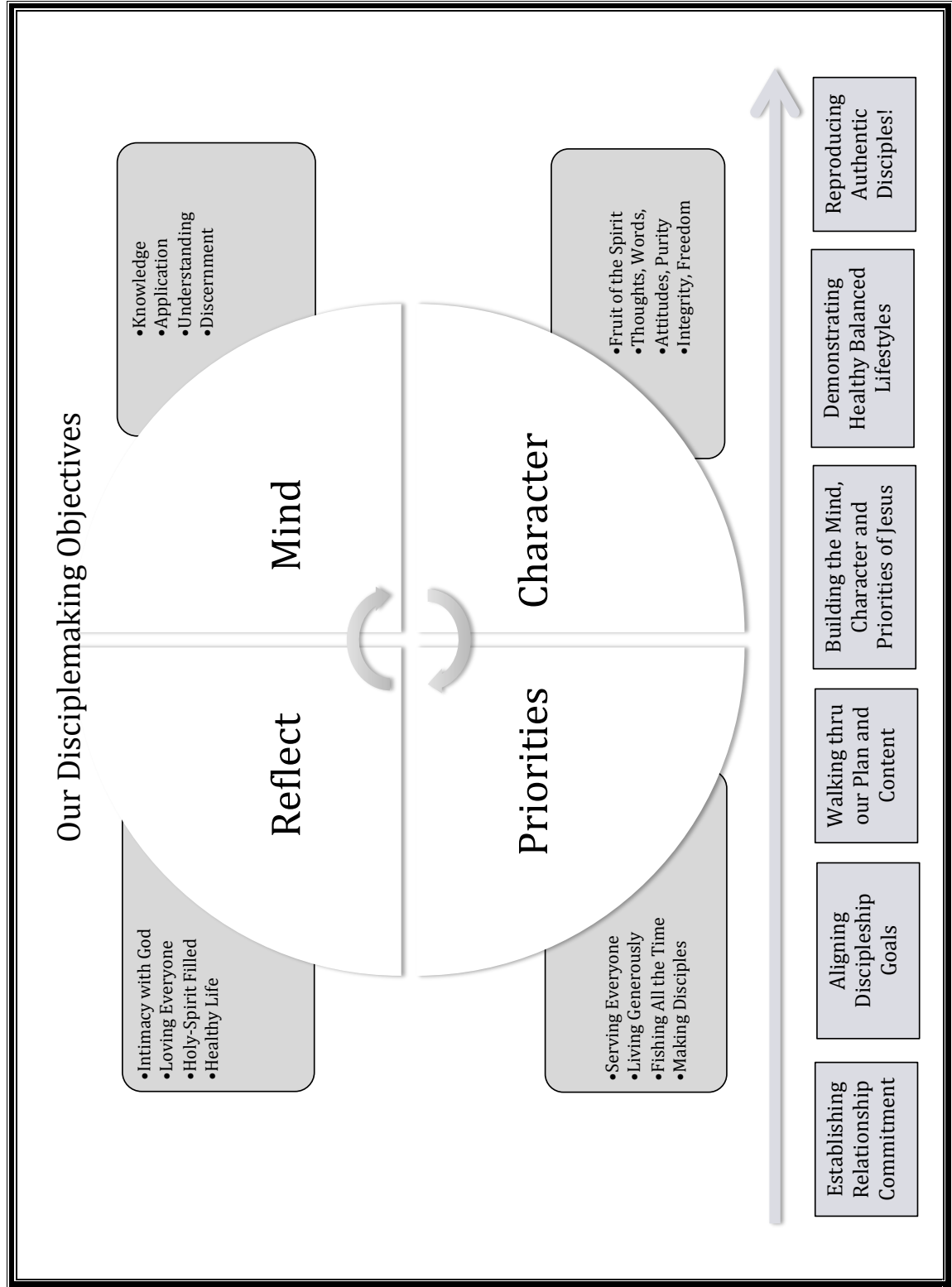




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Our Plan

So here's the plan. We want to journey together into a whole new way of living and thinking. We want to walk and talk together as a team for as long as it takes to accomplish our goals and objectives. We want to actually change. We want to be filled with God's power, passion and priorities in all of our lives. We want to learn what it really means to surrender, get transparent and become accountable and authentic. We want to be on mission together. We want to be people who truly reflect and represent our Father as we then multiply what we have become in others.

Why is it so important that we weren't first filling our minds with information?

Notice that the end-goal isn't simply growing up in the Lord. It's also passing it on! The greatest weakness in the church today is that we don't grow up and we don't pass it on. You can help change that. You can be part of God's revolution to be and to make authentic disciples who multiply. Imagine what will happen ten years from now if we all start obeying God in this foundation strategy.

What will the church look like ten years from now? How will we affect that?

Normally, we will meet together for twelve to twenty-four months. The more we spend time together, the sooner we will help each other grow up and move forward in the Kingdom. Jesus spent about two years with His disciples before He left them. But they practically lived together. Our busy lives will have to be navigated to gain consistent, quality time together. Again, we will learn that disciplinemaking is as much about talking together and walking through life together as it is about filling and forming our minds with content. God will use all of it to mold us more and more into His image.

Why do you think it takes so long to become authentic disciples?



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We will know that it's time for a new level of commitment and leadership when we are all ready to start our own teams. That's the moment of truth we live for. Teams become a wonderful and safe place for strength, encouragement and support. We can always go back to old friends for all of those good reasons. But disciples multiply. "Go and make disciples who go and make more disciples." That was the original plan. That's the plan we want to live by!

Why do you think it's critical that we all multiply as disciplemakers when we finish becoming disciples?

Let's look at that Goal Line- right from the beginning. In order to win, here are the ten things that need to happen.

- a) We'll all grow close and get real with each other.
- b) We'll learn to pray powerfully with each other.
- c) We all grow up and will reflect the mind, character and priorities of Jesus.
- d) We will help each other grow out of weaknesses and imbalance.
- e) We'll all learn to fish and will fish- for life!
- f) We'll go on mission together.
- g) We'll get it, live it and know how to multiply it.
- h) We'll all recruit three people to be on our own teams.
- i) We'll all start our own teams in the next 12-24 months.
- j) I will continue to guide you and the four of us will continue to come together indefinitely, on a less regular basis, as the leaders of this movement for encouragement, discussion, strength and prayer.

All of this leads us to a Definition and a Commitment.



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What is a Discipleship Team?

A discipleship team is a small group of believers focused on growing up and becoming fully developed followers of Jesus.

We come together, on purpose, with focus, and with a plan to walk through a process that will help all of us multiply the lifestyle of an authentic disciple.

We all commit to meet regularly, to grow up intentionally, to become mission-al together and to help each other reflect the mind, character and priorities of Jesus.

Our goal is to all demonstrate consistent, Spirit-filled character and thinking, a holistic understanding of God's Word and His principles and a life given both to taking lost people to heaven and building authentic disciples.

We all learn to trust, to listen, to encourage, and exhort each other, with a commitment to mutual transparency and accountability.

We commit to doing life together, spending valuable time, both in our group and outside our group, in order to really know, learn from and help each other decrease in our weaknesses and become strong sons and daughters of our Father.

In our time together, we focus on **Connecting** deeply with each other, **Checking** on our spiritual growth, **Centering** our focus on life-changing content, and **Committing** to healthy change.

We commit to walk with each other until we all grow strong enough to multiply and create our own discipleship teams.

We will commit to walk with each other in prayer and community even when our group ends and we are discipling others.

My Commitment

I commit to being a part of a discipling team. I will do whatever it takes to surrender to the Lord and grow strong in His Spirit. I want to reflect the Mind, Character and Priorities of Jesus. I want to spend the rest of my life multiplying the life of Christ in others.

Name _____

Date _____



Using the Team Gathering Planner

The Team Gathering Planner is meant to be a resource to help you stay focused and intentional as a team. It's not meant to be the regular formula that you have to walk through every time you meet. That could easily take many hours and would become boring over time. The Guide is meant to help you think about the four areas that need to be covered. But you may find a better order of interaction at each gathering or as a group. For example, you find that you work better jumping right into Centering on your content and the Connecting and Checking works better later in your time together. Be flexible. This is meant to help you, not restrict you.

As you look at the four sections of discussion, think about your time management. Some of you have an hour together and others of you are carving out several hours at a time. As you've been meeting together, are you managing to get to each of the areas of need? We need to **Connect**. We need to **Check** on how we are growing in our five areas of spiritual maturity. We need to **Center** on content that will grow us up in our spiritual journey. And we need to **Commit** ourselves to practical application. We may spend more time in one or two areas one week and we need to dive in to the other areas the next time. Are we maintaining a balance in our objectives? Are we spending enough time getting to know each other? Are we learning to trust each other? Are we getting transparent? Are we learning to actually listen to each other and hear what's really being said? Are we spending good time praying together? Are lives changing? Are we developing the mind, character and priorities of Jesus? That's our End-Goal! If our interactions aren't taking us toward that goal, something has to change. Is our content moving around to all the right issues that we are struggling with? Is it building a holistic set of values and priorities in our lives? Are we beginning to see God impacting lives and bringing healthy change?

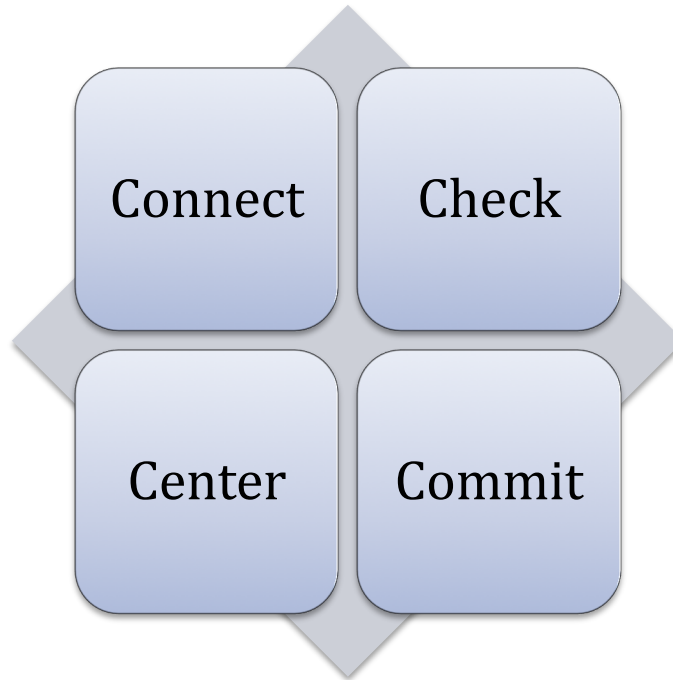
Three of our four sections are designed for fifteen to twenty minutes of discussion and prayer, leaving an hour for content. That will vary from time to time, but the plan establishes the priority for each of these four areas of interaction. Make sure that you are giving each of these areas the time and priority that they deserve.



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Team Interaction

CONNECT

Take time every time you meet to reconnect with each other. Connecting isn't just talking. It's listening. It's helping the group listen. It's getting in each other's lives and hearing stories about life. It's sharing the good and the bad. It's becoming transparent with each other. It's becoming so close and committed to each other that you would do anything to help each other out of any problem. Now that takes time. It won't happen overnight.

CHECK

This section brings us to the time to check up on our five areas of focus—intimacy with God, reflecting His love, serving everyone, fishing for life and making disciples. We want to look back at the application from our last



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time together. And we also want to always remember our goal- an authentic disciple reflects the mind, character and priorities of Christ. We want to look at how we are doing in each of these areas. From time to time, we will want everyone to retake the **iMultiply Self-Assessment**. This section provides a chance to look at our track record. How are we demonstrating in each of these areas? What does our intimacy with God look like? Is it working? Am I developing the right habits that are building a close walk with God? Am I seeing His character developing and growing stronger in me? Are others seeing His reflection of love pouring out of me? Am I seeing a difference in my life? Is my character changing? Is my desire to serve and to be generous with my time and resources growing? Is my heart for lost people growing stronger? As all of you unpack, end this time with some healthy prayer for each other focusing on what you have talked about. Make some of this time an opportunity for confession before the Lord.

CENTER

This section brings us to our content for our time together. Generally plan to spend an hour on the content. Don't read through it. Wrestle with the issues. The review of truth without wrestling with how it applies to our lives is a waste of time. The church is filled with people filled with knowledge who don't know how to live! We need to understand the story or doctrine or truth so we can fully apply it and also pass it on. Remember again what Paul says:

You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others. **II Timothy 2:2**

This thought of passing the truth on with accuracy and reliability is a big deal. Heresies and the misrepresentation of truth happen when people pass on principles that they don't really understand. So, as disciplemakers, we all need to get it, and then we need to be sure that they get it. Plan to revisit truth and application over and over again until everyone really understands and is living it. That's our job. Do it!



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COMMIT

This section of our time together is meant for application. You want to always have an application for the truth that you are processing. Information without formation leads to stagnation. We don't need any more stagnant Christians! What do we do with this content? How do we apply it this week? What are the take-homes from our time together? What do we want to see change, in our attitudes, in our character, in our thinking, in our actions, at home, at work and wherever we are? What do we want to report back on the next time we meet? What are we commit to? Talk about it. Pray about it. Pray for each other. Then go for it! That's it!

Talk about each of the four areas of interaction. What is the purpose for each area? What happens if we keep skipping one or two of these areas of discussion? Give some examples. And what happens if we don't include some healthy prayer time in our gatherings? How do we keep our times together alive and energized?



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Team Gathering Planner

CONNECT (~20)

Catch-Up / Stories / Life / Family / Friends / Work

Celebrations / Disappointments

What is God saying? How are you responding?

What changes are you making? Old Habits / Struggles / Battles New Patterns / Plans

Prayer

CHECK (~20)

Intimacy with God Habits

Reflecting His Love Stories Family

Serving Everyone Stories

Fishing for Life People

Making Disciples Plan

Prayer

**An Authentic
Disciple Reflects the
MIND CHARACTER
and PRIORITIES of
Christ**

CENTER (~60)

The Main Thing

Dialogue

The Lesson

Dialogue

The Focus

Prayer

COMMIT (~20)

The Assignment

Interaction

Prayer

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Team Essentials for Disciplemaking

1) In Community

We are all born into a Community, called the Family of God. Over and over again, we are commanded to help each grow up and get strong in the Lord. We certainly need to be committed to help each other, through both spontaneous and intentional encouragement and exhortation. We need to build a culture of love as a community, identifying and caring about those who need to grow up.

Why is community so important to God's plan for our spiritual lives?

What differences can you describe between being in a larger community and being in a smaller group of believers?

Why would God want us all in a community where we can really know each other?

What happens when we become isolated and get out of community?



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2) In Relationship

Disciplemaking was meant to be done in the context of relationships.

A disciple in historic cultures was the student of a teacher or the apprentice of a master. Jesus' own example modeled intense interaction. The disciples practically lived together. A classroom can never match the interaction necessary to build authentic disciples, unless the teacher also spends extensive time with each student. That's the only way to be sure they really understand. This is too important to leave to hope and chance.

Why would God want all of us to have intense interaction with other believers in our process of growing up?

How does that force us to go beyond classroom settings?

What part of disciplemaking gets missed when we don't get personal?



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Life Together- Making disciples will take a lot of time and effort. The disciples and discipler must grow to know each other well. You are shaping someone's life, for life. And you're doing it for God! Your very words and actions will help build your disciples. People learn far more from what you do than what you say. Howard Hendricks, a great teacher of truth, said that Christianity is more caught than taught.

What's the value of spending lots of time together? And what gets missed when we don't?

How do we do life together without robbing our families and other friends, as well as all the other things that are of value to us?

What sort of things can we do together that will build and deepen our friendship and will provide opportunities to learn from each other?



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Transparent- One of the secrets of growing up is getting transparent with trusted friends. Most of us learn to hide our weaknesses and insecurities, as best we can. We've learned the hard way that there is always someone out there who will hurt us if they know the truth. At least we think there is someone out there. It's happened in the past, so it's likely to happen again. We build levels of protection around ourselves to keep from being vulnerable.

Here's the problem: we won't get well if we don't deal with our inner issues. We don't see our blind spots because we are blind to them, by definition. It's trusted friends who can best help us deal with our issues so we can become all that God wants us to be. Look at the stories of the disciples. We learn so much about bad and good character as we see the disciples interacting with each other and with Jesus. The disciples clearly grew to identify their weaknesses and their need for Holy Spirit power as they were just themselves hanging out with Jesus. The same thing will happen as we develop trust and respect for each other in a band of disciples.

Why is it so hard to become transparent with each other?

What are the benefits of becoming more and more honest and open with close, trusted friends?

What happens to us when we stay closed and choose not to become transparent with others?

How do we learn to trust others and to be trusted by other?

What should we do when trusted friends let us down or damage our trust?



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Accountable- Accountability goes hand in hand with transparency.

Disciples won't grow if they aren't accountable for their words, attitudes and actions. We help each other grow up. That level of transparency and accountability has to be talked about from the very beginning. Both are a must. That won't happen overnight, but the group needs to know the foundations that relationships are being built on. Surrendering to become increasingly transparent and accountable to someone or to a group takes time and it varies from person to person.

Confidential- Another key part of accountability and transparency is **confidentiality**. What happens in a discipling relationship must stay in that relationship. Individuals or groups that open up with each other need to know that what they share with the group will stay within the group.

How does accountability help us grow stronger in the Lord?

Why does not being accountable to anyone hurt us spiritually?

How would you describe someone who is accountable to no one?

Why is it critical that we are completely confidential with each other's issues?

What does complete confidentiality mean to you?



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3) In the Spirit and Word-Based

Our plan to make disciples has to always remain focused on God's Word and what His Spirit is trying to build in us. We meet with one intention- to grow stronger and more mature as disciples of Christ. We can't become a social club. What a waste of time. And we can't become a philosophy club, the club of the latest opinion or the newest book club. We can read and discuss and thoroughly analyze the best spiritual books out there today. But if they're not founded on and guided by spiritual truth, we're setting ourselves up for trouble. Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 2:15:

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

A thorough understanding of God's Word and its principles is so necessary for every disciple. The Word of God brings life to all of our discussions and the Holy Spirit is right there to guide us and to bring understanding and conviction.

What happens when we try to grow strong in the Lord without really studying the Word?

What happens when we study the Word without a close relationship and dependence on God and His Holy Spirit?

How does someone study the Word and miss the Truth?



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Why do people come up with so many different and opposite perspectives when they study the Bible?

How much of the Bible and its principles do we need to know to be a fully developed disciple, ready to make more disciples?

What do we need to do to insure that we are actually learning the truth the way God planned for us to know it?

What are the habits that you are wanting to develop to help you listen to God and learn from His word?



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4) Transformative

Disciplemaking must be transformative and not simply informative.

Information is part of the package, but it's so not useful and unfruitful if it stands alone. The church is full of venues that provide information for all. And most of the forums are voluntary with no accountability.

Measurable- Authentic disciplemaking will produce clear and unmistakable changes in a disciple that can be seen as measurable. It's obvious when we grow up from childhood to adulthood. Our bodies and the way we think, look and act change completely. Our transformation spiritually from childhood to adulthood should be just as obvious. Disciplemaking helps us grow up. The process forces us to deal with the inner and outer issues that need to come into alignment with godly living. As we progress, we see things differently. Our character is measurably different. For example, all of us have character defects. As the Holy Spirit transforms us, we should all be amazed as we watch ourselves changed. If, for example, we're impatient, we see this miraculous refining and redefining of values. We become more and more patient without even trying. We realize the distinct difference is our surrender and dependence on the Holy Spirit. We see other changes- a softer heart, a deeper passion for right and wrong, more commitment for Kingdom service and more love for the Lord, the Family and the Lost. The list goes on and on.

What's the difference between disciplemaking that is transformative or informative?

What does the disciple have to do differently to be transformed?



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What are some specific examples of change that you have seen God do in the lives of other disciples who have been experiencing transformation?

What types of changes need to happen in our character? What are some of the things that you would like to see changed in your character?

What are some other areas of transformation that you would like to see happen in your own life?

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Missional- An authentic disciplemaking process helps believers actually align their lives with God's mission. God saves us to go on mission with Him the rest of our lives. We are called to so much more. Listen to the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:13-16

You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.

You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house.

In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

An authentic disciple increasingly recognizes that he or she is under the Lordship of Jesus, serving everyday at His will. We are no longer our own. We understand that we've been bought with a price. These concepts aren't simply words known to be the truth of God. They have to become the reality of our lives. Our careers, our desires, our family, our dreams, and our assets all come second to serving God with our lives. This sounds terrible if we are choosing to live life our way and are marginalizing God. But, in reality, walking with God and reflecting His mind, character and priorities makes everything else in life so much richer. We don't throw away all the things that we enjoy, just to serve God. God actually transforms those things into the tools we use to touch and change the world. Our family life deepens and is far richer. Our purpose at home and at work becomes clearer. Life takes on a whole new meaning when Jesus and His vision becomes our own vision of life. The disciplemaker has the opportunity to help the disciple see and experience this deeper reality.

As we surrender more and more of our will to the Lordship of Christ, our passion for His mission becomes inescapable. God loves lost people and He wants them found! God places and grows that burden in each of our hearts until we have to do something. Jesus started His movement with an invitation and a plan. He said, "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men." That's the destiny of every authentic disciple! You and I are surrounded



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by lost people who desperately need Jesus. We all get to help bring them home! Then we get to help them grow up and bring their family and friends home. That's missional living!

What do you think it means to align our lives with God's mission and then be on mission with God the rest of our lives? What's the point of the Matthew 5 passage?

How are we supposed to let our light shine for Jesus all day every day?

How does it make you feel to think that you are under the Lordship of Jesus and that He wants to guide your life and time use?

If God wants to give all of us a passion to live out His mission, what do we have to do to open our hearts to that call?

How do we make sure we are doing what God wants us to do with our time and life?



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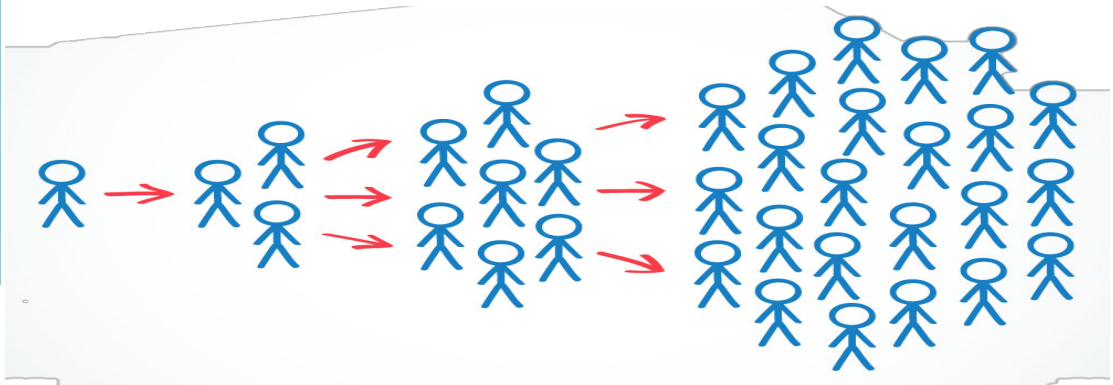
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Multiplying- Real discipling is an investment both in the life of the disciple as well as future generations that are influenced by that discipling relationship. A father or mother pours into his or her children. They often make a lasting image of themselves that can be seen for generations to come. Parenting goes far beyond raising a child. As the child grows up, gets married and has children and grandchildren, parents continue on the adventure of molding and shaping thinking, character and priorities. But now they are impacting generations! Their influence now includes children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and on and on.

We're talking about intentional legacies that blossom as families put God first and pray for blessing and influence. Real discipling can have the same power and influence. If we disciple for lasting results, we will walk with our disciples as they grow up, as they begin to disciple others and as they help their disciples disciple others. Why wouldn't we want to insure the fruitfulness of our efforts? Paul said this to Timothy in II Timothy 2:2:

You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.

Paul is clearly describing a natural process of passing truth on that looks a lot like parenting. Someone taught me what I've taught you. Now pass it on so they too can pass it on. This doesn't sound like a classroom process. Paul took the time to make sure that Timothy really understood and was walking in those truths. He now was continuing to father him, even at a distance, to pass those truths on to people who would be reliable enough to do the same thing. **This is discipling!**



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Why do you think that authentic discipling takes a real investment of time, emotion and resources?

How would you describe what that investment of time would look like?

What do you see as the difference between teaching someone Biblical truth versus taking the time to invest in shaping his or her life?

Can you describe the kingdom value of a continuing walk with a disciple that helps them grow strong in the Lord, learn to fish, and make disciples and then multiply?

What are the natural obstacles to this kind of discipling? Why would you want to work through those obstacles?

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5) Fully Invested

Highly Committed- It sounds like real discipling requires that **we live life together**. We eat, we walk, we talk, we laugh, we cry, we play and we pray together. We hang as families and singles, we go out, we camp out, we barbecue, we evangelize, and we disciple, together. We give ourselves the time to naturally create profound and undeniable change in those we are walking with.

Now, we also have our jobs, families, home groups and other responsibilities. Most of us can't take off like Jesus did with His guys. That's another reason why it will take time. And it clearly demands a high level of commitment, both from the discipling maker and those he or she is discipling. Without that, something will die along the way. And it will probably be the goal of making an authentic, reproducing disciple.

Disciples are made like a home is built. Blueprints have to be studied and adhered to and the foundations have to be poured. The framework has to be built and finished and then all of the components can be added. And everything gets inspected along the way. Does this match what the architect drew? Is this what the Master had in mind? What does the Word say? That kind of requirement takes our full investment.

Why does making a authentic disciple who truly reflects the mind, character and priorities of Jesus take this high a commitment?

If discipling takes this high a level of commitment, how can we make it work with the busyness of our lives and responsibilities? How will you make all of this fit into your busy life?

If we don't commit ourselves to being and making authentic disciples, what will happen to the church?



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What is a Disciple?

There are many definitions of a disciple, long and short. Webster dictionary says a disciple is one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another; a convinced adherent of an individual. That's Jesus for all of us. In the world of Biblical truth, many of us have created our own definitions of what a disciple is. Almost all of the versions are Biblical and helpful. They come from different angles. Many of us define what a disciple is, based on our own paradigm and sometimes in reaction to what we see missing in other definitions. Some of us measure all the qualities found throughout Scripture. Others of us summarize those qualities into a precise list. I personally like something that everyone, young and old, can memorize and remember. Then we can unpack that short, concise definition and build on all the details. Here's my definition:

An authentic disciple reflects the mind, character and priorities of Christ.

He or she loves, grows, serves, evangelizes, makes disciples and multiplies.

He or she loves God intimately, walks in the Truth and by the Spirit, reflects the overflow of that love to God's family and the watching world, serves everyone, goes fishing as a lifestyle and makes multiplying disciples.

A disciple deepens and fully invests in three love relationships-
Loving God, loving the Family of God, and loving the Lost.

Summarize what an authentic disciple is, adding details in your own words.

What does it mean to be authentic? Describe what someone looks like when they aren't authentic? How does that make you feel?

What do you think Jesus was planning to produce in His disciples?



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Becoming a disciple is often equated with helping people learn the Word of God and understand the principles of God. We teach and preach and fill minds with all kinds of information. We put people through all kinds of classes and seminars, retreats and home groups. Now, it's so important to learn the Word and its principles. But our churches are filled with people who know everything about Jesus but they don't look anything like Jesus! Paul makes a powerful statement in his letter to the Corinthian church (I Corinthians 13.)

"If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing."

It doesn't matter how much we know and how much we believe. Paul says that if we don't have God's character, we have nothing! We shouldn't minimize the need to study the Word and to know the Truth. But brilliant heretics know the Word and will quote it better than we can. The Pharisees and religious leaders who killed Jesus were students of the Word. And all of the cults use the Word. They just don't know how to interpret it properly. And they're taking people to hell everyday! We can't rest on knowing God's Word as the ultimate goal in making real disciples.

An authentic disciple reflects the mind, character and priorities of Christ. If that's what we're to be and to build, what does it actually mean? All of us are on a journey toward maturity. None of us is without sin. All of us fail more than we'd like to admit. But we can't afford to lower the standard of discipling to a knowledge-based proposition. So let's look at each of these three components.

Why is being a disciple more than just knowing everything about God's Word and His principles?

Why doesn't it matter that we have great Christian gifting and knowledge but no authentic love?



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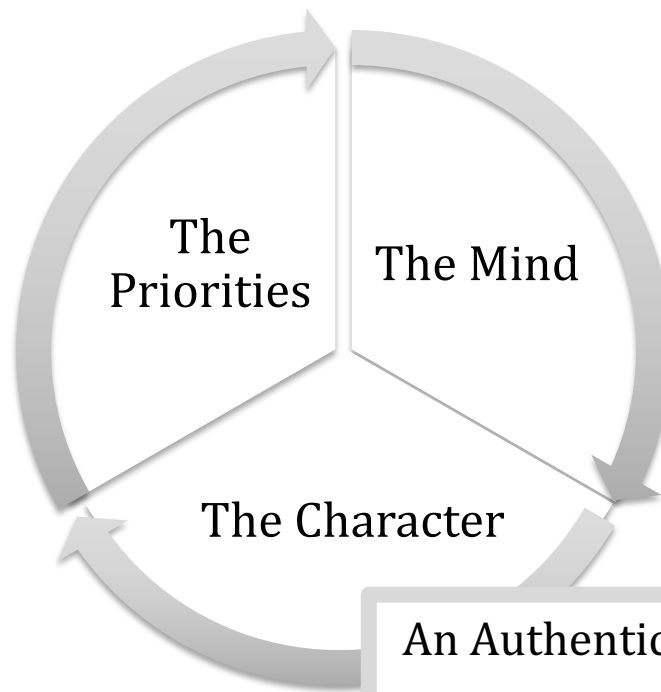
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An Authentic Disciple
Reflects Christ

1) Reflecting the Mind of Christ

Reflecting the mind of Christ is so much more than demonstrating that we know the Bible. It's thinking like Jesus. It's processing like Jesus. It's responding to information and issues and situations the way Jesus would respond. It's having a mind that has been shaped by and saturated with the Word and is now under the guidance and control of the Spirit. We need to know the Word in its fullness. Fellow believers are instructed to help us as we grow in our knowledge of God. That's what church, shepherding, teaching and discipling is all about. But ultimately, the Spirit guides us into all truth. He confirms truth as it's spoken to us or as we read it in a book. And He can guide us away from what authors or even our leaders are saying when they are wrong. The Spirit gives us the wisdom to unpack all of our information and all of our circumstances, both easy and difficult, and to know what to do and say.

Why is it so important that we actually reflect the mind of Jesus?

How is that possible?



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If God wants everyone to know His truth, why do you think people disagree on so many things in the Bible?

If God's Spirit wants to guide us into the real truth, what do we need to do on our part to help Him get us there?

What do you need to change to allow God to guide you and shape your mind to be more and more like His?

The Word and the Spirit also help us to decide what is good and what is evil. Our minds can become very confused without God's help. Thoughts and temptations can come at us and we have no grid to discern what's coming from our own mind, from God or from a demon. So we can assume and presume something that may be false. The Word is truth. It stands as a standard against all lies in our mind or from the enemy. But it's the Spirit who enables us to discern what is truth and what is error. As someone misinterprets the Word, the Spirit gives us the ability to think clearly and to even perhaps present the truth with a spirit of love and gentleness. Knowledge can't stand by itself. Information without transformation brings no solution. We add the Holy Spirit and the Word comes alive!

Explain why some people can spend a lot of time studying the Word and completely miss the truth and why others can spend time with God, not study His Word and have the same problem.

How much time do we need to spend with God and studying His Word to really reflect the mind of Christ? And what do we need to do with that time to end up being what God wants us to be?



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2) Reflecting the Character of Christ

God's plan is to build disciples who reflect the full picture of who He is. We clearly need the Word and its Truth, revealed and made alive by the Spirit of God. Then we add godly character to the mix. Look at what Peter said in his second letter (II Peter 1:3,5-9) about the process of growing up spiritually:

By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.

The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins.

In other words, it's a package deal! All of these components make a disciple of Jesus. Our knowledge becomes more and more productive and useful as we grow up in all of these other areas as well!

Let's talk about what Peter is trying to tell us. What do you think he means when he says that God has given us everything we need to live a godly life? What does that mean in your life?

How do we use all of our strength and make every effort to respond to God? Go through each of the qualities that we are to be growing strong in and talk about how we strengthen each one. What does a generous provision of moral excellence look like in your life?

Name and discuss several of the reasons Peter gives for why we need to grow up as disciples of Jesus.



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By the way, it's wonderful to know that all of this looks just like the fruit of the Spirit. Look at how similar Paul's list is in his letter to the Galatian church. (Galatians 5:22-23):

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

We don't try to produce the fruit. It's too hard. I know. I've tried to do it a lot in my lifetime. And I'm here to declare- it doesn't work! The energy and good intentions will always fade. The mask will slip off, when you're tired, when you're under pressure, when someone's pushing your buttons, when only the ones you love are watching, when you least expect it. Listen- we're not meant to try harder. We're meant to draw closer. "Draw close to Me and I will draw close to you!" (James 4:8) That's what He wants and that's what He promises. It's amazing. We remind ourselves of our absolute inadequacy and our need for His strength each and every day. As we draw closer and closer and become more and more dependent on Him, the character of Christ just happens. Along the way, it's the Spirit's job to point out and convict us of sinful thoughts, attitudes, words and actions. He'll help us learn to surrender more and more of our lives to Him. It's also His role to fill us and grow us in each of these areas.

Explain what you think it means that the Holy Spirit produces these nine character qualities in your life. Talk about each of the qualities and what you think they mean.

Which of these qualities are you strong in naturally? Which ones are you weakest in? Explain what that looks like. Have you tried to get better in those areas? Has it worked? Why do you need God's supernatural power to grow strong in all of these areas? How do you get Him to produce character like patience in you?

How much desperation and time do you think you need with God to see these changes actually take place and remain consistent in your life?



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This is one of the most difficult parts of becoming a mature disciple. It's having a complete mind and character transplant. Most of us have learned to depend on our own strength to do life. In fact, most parenting and schooling is aimed at teaching and fortifying self-sufficiency. Because this is the way we live, it's crept into the church and it's been accepted as the norm for Christian living as well. Here's the tragedy. We can lead home groups, elder, usher, teach classes and preach in our own strength. The more we do it, the easier it is. Entire churches can function using human knowledge, logic, intuition, wisdom and talent. We can even use spiritual gifts with no demonstration of spiritual character. I don't fully understand that one, but I see it all the time. We can use spiritual words and principles, and we can talk about faith and power but not have consistent power for everyday living! That's sounds so scary, but it's true. This has to change if we want to make authentic disciples who will impact the world.

Explain from your perspective how we can live the Christian life and learn how to rely on our own strength instead of depending on God's strength. Talk about what you've seen around you and in your own live to support this reality.

Why is this so destructive for you , the Church and new believers as they become Christians? How do we shift from depending on our own strength to depending on God's strength?

Paul knew how much we would drift and then try to do the Christian life without the power of the Holy Spirit. That's why He taught over and over again about the critical need to live by the power of the Spirit and not by the flesh. I love this passage in Ephesians 5:15-20:

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. **Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit,** speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.



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This passage summarizes an entire lifestyle of living and walking in the Spirit- all day and every day. This isn't talking about Sunday. This is reflecting our life at home, work and wherever we go. This is the life of an authentic disciple. And the centerpiece is the control of the Holy Spirit. Don't be controlled by other things, like alcohol. Don't be controlled by desire, ambition, circumstances or people. And don't be controlled by your own strength and capabilities. Be controlled by the Spirit of God! Some of you reading this right now don't know how to do that. You've never let go of our own control. You've never really surrendered to the full control and Lordship of Jesus. Do it now. Surrender. Pause right now and ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with His power and strength. Ask Him to show you what needs to go and what you need to do to bring wonderful, miraculous change in your character, attitudes and actions. Ask Him to heal you of the scars of the past that may be keeping you from being all that you can be in Christ. Let His presence and His character shine!

Talk about how easy it is to be controlled by others things? What are the things out there that grab our minds and hearts and bring us under their control? What are some of those things that you struggle with that take some control of your life? Include people and their influence on your life.

How do we get rid of those areas of control? How do forgiveness, repentance, and surrender help us move toward freedom? What do you think we need to do to be controlled by the Holy Spirit all day, every day?

Take time to go back, read the last paragraph and walk through each of the steps. Ask God to do something right now!



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Why does our being real disciples make a difference on the next generation of disciples? How well did the last generation disciple you? How does their discipling you influence how you will disciple the next generation?

What part does discipline play in being a disciple of Jesus? What are the areas of discipline that you think you will need to work the most at to be a consistent, authentic disciple?

What does self-dependence look like in your life? What are some of the changes that you see in your character, thinking, emotions, attitudes and outlook on life as you get closer to God and He rubs off on you?

If we want to become real disciples who bring dynamic change to the next generation of disciples, it starts with us. We have to change the way we live and function, disciplining ourselves day after day. It's equivalent to the discipline of going to a gym or running each day to lose all of those pounds and to get in shape. We have to admit we have a problem, called self-dependence. We can tell our level of self-dependence by how much time we spend with God throughout our day and how much we connect with Him in the functions of our day. Our greatest evidence comes from the inside. Do we see the consistent fruit of the Spirit flowing out of us? Are we overwhelmed as we watch the heart of God welling up in us, making us care and do things that aren't natural to us? All of us should become increasingly aware of where we stumble and fall. We should be continually amazed and grateful when we see ourselves functioning so differently from how we know we function in our own strength. This is all part of the journey of making real disciples. But it has to start with the discipler. We've got to lose that self-dependent spirit ourselves, or that's exactly what we'll pass on to those we disciple. That would be terrible. Don't do it! This is about imitating the character of Christ- it's actually reflecting His character as it shines through us!



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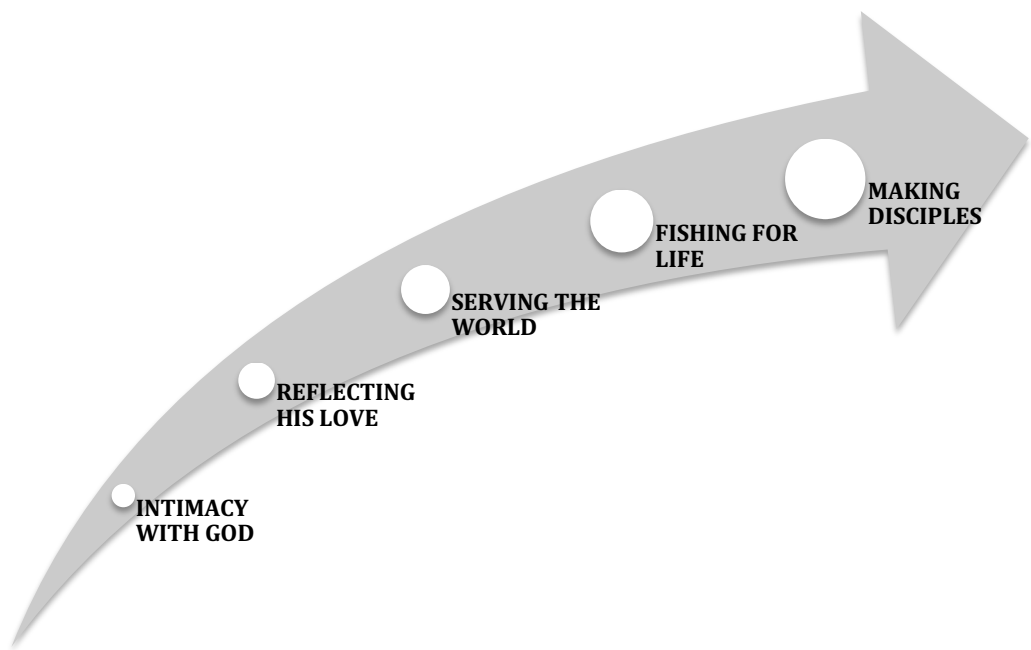
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The Priorities of Christ



3) Reflecting the Priorities of Christ

As we draw close to God and He refines and infuses our mind and character with His thoughts and passions, our priorities change. We can't help it! It's the natural product of being filled with the Spirit. We begin to see the world like He sees it. Our hearts break for lost people. We see a sleepy church and we desperately want to wake it up. Our hearts are softened to the injustices that we see around us. Sometimes we don't know what to do with all of the feelings that are unleashed in our hearts. That's where discipleship is so helpful. The Word and the Spirit show us how to live and where to direct our emotion, energy and resources. God has wonderful, unique plans for all of us that vary with our talents, gifts, interests and journeys. We're all shaped differently. And many believers don't really



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know what to do next. That's where we come in. The disciplemaker has the opportunity to help guide the conversation within the framework of God's Word and the Holy Spirit's leading.

How have you seen God changing your priorities? How do you know that it's God doing it? In what ways are you seeing the world and the church differently? How did it make you feel as you read the last paragraph?

Why do you think it's important that we are discipled as we begin to grow in the Christian life? And why do you think that you need to disciple others after someone has discipled you?

With so many options, here are some top-of-the-list priorities for every disciple to start with.

a) Intimacy with God

We've affirmed over and over again that our highest purpose in life is to walk closely with our Father, the Lord Jesus Christ and His Spirit.

The Westminster Catechism declares that the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. Our highest purpose in life is to give pleasure to God, our Father, as we walk with Him through life. But it's impossible for us to please God and give Him pleasure without His power operating in our lives. And we won't gain His power without drawing close to Him. He is our Source of strength and life. As we draw close to Him, He draws close to us. He is the Vine and we are the branches. That's why this must become our first priority, our highest discipline. Everything begins with our intimacy with God. We can't move forward without it!

Explain for your perspective why intimacy with God is so critical. How do we get that close to God and stay that close to God? Is that easy for you or hard? How important is it to you to be consistently close to God? What do you think it will take for you to do that?



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Our intimacy with God, our closeness to Him, with growing surrender and dependence, makes us more and more like Him. He miraculously transforms us. That process leads us to increasingly reflect the mind, the character and the priorities of Christ. We can't help it. It's amazing! He changes the way we think, look and act. It's not simply growing up over time as we adapt to our faith. Otherwise, we wouldn't drift backwards when we aren't staying close to God. Notice how your bad character qualities come back when you aren't as intimate with Him. Mine do. And notice how your passion for the things of God and His priorities can easily fade. I've seen it happen in many areas of my life. I've seen it with my heart for evangelism. And I've seen it in my compassion for people. Then, when I repent and acknowledge my drift, and I draw close again, it all comes back. I love it! I can't control it. All I can do is draw close and respond to the Spirit. Every disciple needs to be brought back here. This is the starting point. Everything in the Christian life flows out of this discipline and walk.

Describe what you've seen God do in your life that has clearly demonstrated His transforming power instead of you just trying harder. Why is this discipline and walk such a critical issue and an important value to constantly evaluate?

The Holy Spirit has actually been given to us to empower us for daily living. We've already said that many believers suffer for years as they try to do the Christian life in their own strength. Yet the Word points us to a dependent relationship with the Holy Spirit. Although we have all of the Holy Spirit at salvation, He clearly doesn't have all of us! The Spirit has been given to us for so many reasons. We desperately need His power and strength to demonstrate consistent character. But we also need Him for wisdom, clarity, management, priorities and so much more. As we learn to depend on Him and listen to Him, everything changes. Life becomes richer, healthier, more joyous and so much more fulfilling.

Talk about the reality that the Holy Spirit is in you and always with you, to help you with everything, each and every day. How do you know He's there? What do you think about Him being there for you throughout your day? How do you depend on Him and listen to Him?



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b) Reflecting His Love

As we draw close to God, He draws close to us and fills us with His Spirit and His love. Moses radiated such a brilliant shine when he had spent time with God that he had to cover his face when he went out with the people. God's presence in our lives also shines out for everyone to see. The fruit or evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in us is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. People see His love all over us- through our attitudes, our actions, our compassion, our joy in living, and our heart for the things that are on God's heart!

Once again, a disciple thinks, looks and acts like Jesus. This is clearly a process- it doesn't happen overnight. We don't just learn how to do this. It's not an act or a company policy. It's the product of our intimacy with God and our dependence on God. It's the product of His presence and His transforming power in our lives. When we're filled with the Spirit, we look like Jesus at home, at work, at the store, in the neighborhood and on vacation. We look like Jesus when no one but Jesus is looking. This is how we look when we're alert or tired, and when we're at our best or under pressure. When we aren't looking like Jesus, it's evidence that we, again, have drifted backwards. It's clear in those moments that we are more full of our own strength than the strength of the Lord. That's my personal signal to repent once again of self-dependence and to draw close.

Why did Jesus want His disciples to reflect the same attitudes and character qualities that He had? If Jesus wants to draw everyone around you to Him through your reflection of His character, life and attitudes, what do you need to do differently? How well are you reflecting Jesus at home, at school, at work, at the store, to your neighbors and friends, or wherever you are?

Where is it the hardest to look like Jesus when others are watching? What are your biggest obstacles to loving everybody the way Jesus wants us to? Who do you find it hardest to love? How can the Holy Spirit help you with that?



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Reflecting His love is so essential for every disciple. God's reputation is at stake. We are His very own children, called to shine with His light. We are His very own ambassadors in a watching world. Our actions speak so much louder than our words. If our words don't match our actions, why would anyone listen to our words or believe our dogma? If God's desire is to reach more people all around the world, He truly needs a movement of disciples who think, look and act like Him! The more the people all around us see our authenticity and consistency, the more they will begin to believe that we actually have something to say. If our children, our parents, our fellow workers and our neighbors see the character of Jesus reflected in us, they'll be drawn to Him! And that's His plan. Jesus said to His disciples, "Let your light so shine before men that they see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

Talk about the truth that you represent God to everyone around you in this world. How does that make you feel? If your actions do speak louder than your words, what are your actions telling people about your love for them and God? If people see Jesus in you, what does He look like?

What do you think you need to change to become a brighter reflection of Jesus' love? How will you change that?



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c) Serving Everyone

We have a heart to serve people all around us when we are filled with the love of God. We want to help people- our family and friends, other believers, the people we work with and even strangers that we meet in life. That's what happens when we're filled with His love. We could also call it giving- a growing heart to give to others. Serving is giving of our thoughts, time, energy and resources. As we draw closer to God, we become more and more generous. We make ourselves more available. Our desire to give grows and grows.

Describe the difference between how we look at people through our own natural outlook and how that changes when we are filled with God's love.

How in the world does our normal prejudice and selective care change as we get closer and closer to God? Describe how much of that you have experienced in your own life. What do you think will increase that in you? How do you feel about this area of life changing in you?

If most of us are self-serving by nature, what do you think God has to do to change us so we become generous with everything we have?

We need to remember that serving looks different in each of us. Some of us are servants by nature or by gifting, and we'll be first in line to help with our hands. Some of us serve with our minds or our mouths and give guidance or solutions to help. Others of us love to use our resources to serve wherever it's beneficial. It's important to realize that we won't all respond in the same way to needs that arise around us. Our gifts often lead our thinking in how we respond. It's so easy and, unfortunately, natural to get disappointed when others don't want to serve the way we serve or the way we want them to serve. But God's made us very different so we can accomplish much more in our diversity. Don't force people unto your box!



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We need to give each other the freedom to serve in our own way. We also need to make sure that we're not simply justifying our desire **not** to serve. Some of us don't have a heart to serve or to give. We're still very focused on what we want to do with our time and resources. We haven't grown in generosity. That, again, is another evidence that **we** are still more in control of our lives than God's Spirit. We've either reverted or we haven't fully surrendered yet.

Describe how you serve others through your gifts and personality? Why are you quick or slow to help others around you? What motivates you to serve others?

If all of us serve differently, why do we get upset or disappointed in others when they don't want to serve the way we want them to serve? Why do you think God has made us so different from each other?

How do we help people grow up in their heart to serve and to be generous? How do we personally grow up in this area?

Remember, God loves to soften our hearts so we respond to people and needs the same way that He would. It's God's Spirit that awakens our hearts to a need and gives us the desire to help. It's His grand plan and we are simply acting in His power and His will. But we've got to be listening. Again, our hearts soften as we surrender and draw closer and closer to God. If that's not happening, we have a lot to talk about with the Father.

If spiritual change is up to God, what do we need to do to cooperate with Him? Why does God want us to reflect His love to people everywhere as soon as possible?

What has to change in us in order for us to be sensitive to God and sensitive to the needs of people around us? What has to change in you?



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d) Fishing: for Life

One of our greatest callings is to help people move toward a relationship with Jesus. Remember the story when Jesus invited some fishermen into the journey of becoming disciples with these words: “Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.” Follow Me and you will be fishing the rest of your life! As His disciples, this IS who we are. This is one of our major purposes in life. Paul was so moved by the lostness of people and the opportunity to make a difference that he declared that he wanted to save as many as possible! That passion and drive can only flow from the heart of God. He sent His own Son to die for all of us! Certainly, He died to save you and me. But now, as His disciples, we are called to tell that amazing truth to people everywhere. As we reflect His love and power, we earn the right to speak. And as opportunities begin to open, the Holy Spirit uses our lives and our words to breath conviction and life into the hearts and minds of those we touch.

If everyone who follows Jesus is recruited to “fish” for people as part of the “job description” as a Christian, why are so few people doing it? How will we complete God’s plan for us on earth if we don’t “go and make disciples?”

What does it look like to be a fisher of men as part of our daily lives? What role does God play in our lives as we choose to fish for Him?

Describe how hard has it been for you to “fish” in your world.

The New Testament is filled with passages pointing us to our responsibility to be the ambassadors that He has called us to be. But our relationship to God takes all of this a step further. As we draw close to God, as we are filled with the Spirit, we become overwhelmed with a heart for the lost. God fills us with His heart. We can’t help it. We see everyone through different eyes- our neighbors, our family, the people at work or school and the people in Walmart. Their need for Jesus grips our hearts. Perhaps we’ve never felt these feelings before. This is the heart of the disciple. This is the heart of God.



Disciple

Making Authentic Disciples

Notes

What is a Disciple?



What is a Disciple?

Real disciples listen to the Father and begin to act on these thoughts and feelings. Many of us have walked down this missional road. We've built intentional friendships with the people that come to our minds. Some of us have gone on missional journeys. In fact, some of us have even quit our jobs to give ourselves more fully to His mission, here or somewhere in the world. Now, others of us haven't known what to do with these new feelings of compassion that have filled our hearts. That's where training and discipling is so helpful. Someone who's already traveled the road can help the next pilgrim on his or her journey.

It's also normal to lose this passion for lost people when we lose our closeness to God. It happens all the time. We get filled with God's Spirit and our hearts are stirred for people all around us. This often happens at salvation. It also happens when we go through a crisis experience and sense a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit's power and passion. Almost invariably, we sense a new heart for lost people. God's doing that in us! That's when we need to act and form new patterns in our lives. And that's when we need to be discipled and taught how to best build healthy and intentional relationships with our non-believing friends. Unfortunately, for many of us, that didn't happen, and, over time, that initial passion faded away.

Talk about the difference between being God's ambassador in our own strength or doing it because we are filled with his tender heart for the lost. What's wrong with that? Have you ever done it? Talk about it. What creates that change?

If the Holy Spirit is the One who changes us and fills us with this spiritual heart for lost people, what do we need to do to experience that change? And how do we keep it, so it doesn't fade away?

Talk about where you are at in relationship to this life-change.

Go to Selecting the Right People for Friendship Evangelism in the Resource section when you finish this and walk through the process. Plan to keep this process fresh over the next two years!



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What is a Disciple?

Here's one more evidence that we aren't as close to God as we should be. So many of us feel guilty not evangelizing the people in our lives. So we take the classes and work the plan to try to do the right thing. We have the right intentions, but we're missing the key. The classes and training are all good, but they can't produce the right result. Don't try fishing in your own strength! The Holy Spirit is our fishing guide- He leads us to the right people in the right time and shows us what to do and say in the right way. Jesus set the pattern when He addressed His disciples right before He ascended into heaven. Here were some of His last words in Acts 1:8:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Jesus had just told the disciples to wait for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. “Don't go until you get His power! But when you get it, you will have the power to be my witnesses all over the world!” What a giant vision! And what a wonderful package deal. “This is what I command you to do and I'm giving you the absolute, supernatural power to do it!”

But here's a scary thought. Imagine doing all of that on your own. How foolish. He's the One who wants to draw people to salvation. He knows what we don't. We set ourselves up for failure. We set up opportunities that may damage people, saying the wrong things in the wrong way or at the wrong time. And we'll soon lose our desire to even share our faith if all we are using is our own strength. All of this clearly reminds us of our desperate need for His power, strength and wisdom as we go through life. As we again draw close to God, He again draws close to us. He fills us with His love and reignites our hearts to reach lost people for Him.

Do you think you have received the Holy Spirit's power that changes everything and gives you the unstoppable heart and passion to reach your friends and others for Jesus? What's the evidence that that has or has not happened?

What do you think you need to do now to be filled with God's love for others?



Disciple

Making Authentic Disciples

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What is a Disciple?



e) Making Disciples

Authentic disciples make more disciples. That's what we do! In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus made it so clear in His last words to His disciples:

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

This wasn't the Great Suggestion! These were His disciples. They were getting marching orders to pass on from generation to generation. Make disciples and teach every disciple to obey this command and everything else I've commanded you. That means we're to grow up and then help others to grow up and reproduce as well. This is the job. All of our other commitments and relationships in life have new meaning the moment we surrender our lives to Jesus. His Kingdom takes preeminence. That doesn't mean we suddenly ignore or discount our families, our careers and other responsibilities with our newfound faith. Some cults and extreme church settings demand that type of commitment, and it always ends badly.

What do you think it means for you to go and make disciples?

If making disciples is our mission in life, how do we accomplish that in the context of real life, with everything else we do?

How would you apply Jesus' command to your life personally?

Becoming a disciple and disciplemaker doesn't ruin our relationship with people. It strengthens our relationships. We become the amazing person that God intended us to be, and all of our relationships now have much greater value. Everything we do each day has new purpose. We're making disciples. We're investing in every life we touch with heaven in mind. We have a much greater purpose and vision at home with our family.



Disciple

Making Authentic Disciples

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What is a Disciple?



What is a Disciple?

We want all of them to know the Lord and to grow strong in the Lord. Our impressions, our responses, our words, attitudes and actions are shaping their hunger for spiritual things. We are His reflection. Perhaps our neighbors will come to Jesus as they get to know us. The people we work with may have no one else building a bridge for them to journey towards heaven. Our prayers suddenly change and are filled with tears for people everywhere.

God opens our eyes and we see people the way He sees them. As we look at other believers, we see their potential. We see what they could be if they would just grow up. We start finding ways to help them grow. We lead someone to Jesus and now realize that that new believer needs to be invested in. They need to be disciplined! We may meet with that person, meet with another new believer or we may teach a focused class on growing in the Lord. We may gather a group at our home and talk about how to live out the principles that we find in God's Word.

Discuss how deciding that we are called to make disciples of people all around us and stepping into that calling changes the way we look at people.

What needs to change in us in order for us to have the desire to invest in people the rest of our lives?

What role does God play in this kind of thinking and living?

Does God expect every one of us to make disciples? That's a great question. We're all made so differently. Think of the wide spectrum of people across the planet. We think and talk and act so differently from each other. For example, some of us communicate more easily than others. Some of us talk far less and work far more with our hands or minds. That's the way God made us. So if making a disciple requires good talking or teaching skills, many people wouldn't be able to do it. But it doesn't. We make disciples in different ways. A godly mother and father will pour into their children as they grow up. Disciplemaking should begin in our homes! Every believer should feel the responsibility to help others within their circle of influence to grow in the Lord. We all are, in fact, making disciples, all the time, for better or for worse. We are all influencing others by our words, by our



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actions, by the decisions we make and by our character. It's happening even though we're unaware of it. Knowing that should motivate us all to make sure we're influencing people toward a Kingdom lifestyle.

God does command every one of His disciples to make more disciples.

But not everyone will disciple in the same structured way that we describe in our books or manuals. It will never happen and shouldn't be expected. What we need to do is provide discipling for everyone. Everyone who is fully disciplined can then model the life of Jesus and will pass on the principles to those they touch. They may not all use a book or manual, but their lives and quieter words can be as effective as any book or manual! That's how we work together as a family. Think about spiritual communities, living it out loud, together, committed to model missional living, raising up and passing on the truth to current and future generations. Some of us are better with words and content. Others of us may be better at giving time, care and understanding. But all of us play a vital role in building the body up in love. Together. **That leads us to the purpose of this guidebook and website.** Many of us don't know how to build fully developed disciples. And that's because no one has ever done that for us. We don't know how to measure what a real disciple looks like or what he or she does. We may not feel like we are real disciples. Going through this material and applying it with others will change that. It may change everything!

Explain why different kinds of people will make disciples in different ways.

If God expects all of us to make disciples, how does all of this work in a church or group of people? Talk about how we help make disciples as a community of believers.

Why do many people choose to not make disciples even when they know they should?



Disciple

Making Authentic Disciples

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OUR CONTENT

Our Content is what we study and focus on. We have so many choices on what to study. And we are often drawn to what most excites us in our own personality and ability to learn. Some of us are very studious. We love to dig in- to the Word and maybe even the Greek. Some of us like telling and hearing sto- ries, but we don't want to study too deeply. Others of us love a good book that takes us to specific places of spiritual growth. And there are lesson plans for every Book or topic.

The most important part of deciding what content to use in the Disciple- making process is matching the Content to the End-Goal. You can't simply start by picking your favorite book of the Bible or spiritual book or study guide. That may not work and it probably won't reach your ultimate goal.

- **Spiritual Growth-** You have to begin by looking at your individual situa- tion to decide what will help them really grow the most in your spiritual journey.
- **Subjects-** Next, you need to assess what subjects you will need to cover over the next 12-24 months to build authentic disciples who truly reflect the mind, character and priorities of Jesus. This is your End-Goal. The goal is not simply knowledge. Knowledge in itself never produces life. But the goal can't be about going and doing without knowledge and character building as well.
- **The Mind of Christ-** There are over thirty definable topics about Chris- tian living that the Word brings clarity on throughout the Bible. Then there is the Word, filled with stories, history and His story! Our End-Goal is to help our disciples grow so close and intimate with God that they think and see life through God's eyes. There are many books and studies that will guide you into the Word and point you quickly toward specific topics in your study of God's principles.
- **The Character of Christ-** The Word tells us the character qualities that a Christ-follower exhibits. But defining those characteristics in real life



and walking through the thought process of a whole new way of thinking and living takes time and lots of discussion.

- **The Priorities of Christ-** We have to become doers of the Word and not simply hearers. God has actionable priorities that have to be part of the authentic disciple's life. Again, excellent books and studies will point to the verses that demonstrate the lifestyle of serving, fishing and multiplying disciples.
- **Application-** The End-Goal is applying the Truth so our disciples actually live the Life. If they aren't changed and reflecting Jesus, we aren't finished yet!

Some of my Recommendations

There are so many choices for content when we make disciples. And not all books or studies include everything we are looking for. In fact, you will need to go beyond most books and studies to try to cover all of these important topics. A web search will lead you to good content on most subjects. Be careful. Cults, false religions and bad theology fill the internet. Not everything that looks good is the truth. But that's part of listening to God and learning to think and discern what is truth and what is not. Make sure you seek good counsel if you find subjects that are questionable. Now, most of our topics will be found in good books. To give you some guidance, I will recommend three studies that you can consider that are on our website.

- 1) **MULTIPLY** by Francis Chan is available for sale or online and downloadable for free. This book provides excellent content from Biblical history and God's plan for His Church to lifestyle development.
- 2) **THE GROWING OUT series** by Carl Simmons is also available online and downloadable. Six books cover all of the foundational values and issues on Christian living, from Growing in Character to Growing in Your Mission. You may also choose to buy these books.
- 3) **The Discipleship Training Manual** from The Bridge of Sacramento is a great downloadable 24 lesson study of God's Word on Christian living.



Thirty-Two Topics and Categories

Here is a list that can help guide you to the essential areas of conversation and study that we need to have. You will find books, booklets and single page studies available on all of these subjects. It's very helpful to find a series of booklets or books that cover most of these topics. Many of them include thoughtful questions to help with your discussions. The Internet is also filled with sites that have downloadable single sheet studies on many of these topics.

Some Key Topics for Spiritual Growth- Basic and Advanced

Who we are in Christ	Financial Stewardship and Giving
Assurance of Salvation	Christian Values
Worship and Dependence	Christian Character
First Steps- Baptism, Church, ...	Spiritual Gifts
The Bible and How to Read It	Spiritual Fruit
The Purpose and Power of Prayer	Spiritual Discernment
Spirit-Filled Living and the Flesh	Discovering the Will of God
Spiritual Disciplines	Spiritual Warfare
Holiness and Purity	Biblical Foundations
A Lifestyle of Evangelism	-Doctrine and History
Dependence on God	-Lifestyle- ex: Compassion-The Least...
The Family-Loving One Another	-Issues- ex: Abortion, Homosexuality...
Obedience and Christian Living	-Relationships- ex: Marriage, Family...
Stewards of our Resources	World Evangelism
Service and Servanthood	Modeling and Leadership
Equipping Others	Coaching Others for Multiplication



Time- How do we Find It?

We all have limited time and generally fill it up. Most of us don't have extra time. So here's the big question.

How in the world do we find the time to be a disciple?

There- we've asked it! It's the inevitable question on everyone's mind. We're to reflect the mind, character and priorities of Jesus. We're to spend time drawing close to God. We're to be in a healthy and close community with believers, which usually points to church, ministry and a small group. We're to have a healthy marriage and a close, loving family. We're to work hard and be productive at our career. We're all called to fish and to make disciples of others intentionally. How in the world is all of that possible? And where in the world do we find the extra time? These are relevant questions that need to be asked.

Let's begin by looking at our excuses. We are all busy. And we often don't have extra time. So we don't have time for fishing or discipling right now. We have our own families to think about and to influence. We're working hard at our careers. We're already busy with our church. We can even get overwhelmed with all the things that we have to do in life. We have almost no time left. And if there is time left, we're tired! When do we get to turn off our brains and just rest? A lot of us struggle to even find quality time with God. How can we find it for new areas of ministry?

So many of us use at least one of these excuses to justify our exemption from fishing or discipling. Here's the problem. We will always find new "legitimate" excuses for every season of our lives. Our circumstances keep changing, but our schedule will stay full. That's why people of every age and circumstance never get around to fishing and making disciples. And that's why you and I will never join this great missional adventure God has called us into to reach and then disciple others until we stop making excuses and obey! That can happen today.

This example represents everything we need to change in order to live out Christ living in us. How do we quit pornography, jealousy, smoking, impatience, over-drinking, pride, gossip, anger or any other sin issue in our lives? We repent, ask God for His power, freedom and discipline, and we then work on our issues until we change. How do we begin tithing or developing a lifestyle of generosity with money and everything else? Many of us as believers have had terrible habits in our track record in areas like giving. For exam-



ple, we never feel like we have enough money to give generously to God. And when we get more money, we spend it on our growing needs and desires. God is often ignored and we give a token instead of a tithe or even more! We always justify it in our own minds, until the day we decide to obey. Our circumstances usually haven't changed, but our heart has. Something changes inside us and we begin to get generous. We know it's right! That's when we are suddenly forced to readjust our spending and perhaps even our lifestyles. But we know it's the right thing to do, and God has matured us and changed us in the process. That's exactly the same principle of deciding to obey in our time management when we choose to add fishing and discipling to our lifestyles.

Now, our ability to manage our priorities and time is so important. We will either plan and schedule our life and time or it will just happen. If we're not careful, we'll waste countless hours of our lives away. We'll often chase the urgent requests of life at the expense of more important priorities. The phrase "the tyranny of the urgent" describes it so well. If we want to exercise, we'd better plan for it or it probably won't happen. Our priorities will decide if it's important and our management will make it happen, or not. So we look at our weekly schedule and decide when to exercise. If there is no time, something has to go. We can't do everything. That's when we rely on our priorities. Is it a priority to exercise a certain amount of time each week? If it is, we adjust around our other plans and make necessary changes.

We usually end up doing what they think is most important. But the truth is many of us are doing things that aren't important. We're out of balance to varying degrees in our life management. We may work too much, relax too much, watch or listen or play too much. We may church or family too much. God can help you see how to better balance your life if you ask Him for help. But it will always take effort. It won't just happen. Some things will have to go in order for you to add things that need to stay. It's like eating. If we want to be healthy, we just should not eat some foods. And we need to be careful with other foods. It's a fact of life. To get in shape, we need some discipline and planning. Many of those healthy choices will become second nature to us as time goes by. But we'll always have to remember our priorities.

It's the same with the spiritual disciplines of life. It takes real effort to bring appropriate change to our lives. We are actually changing the way we do life. But once those changes become more and more who we are, they will feel very natural to us. By the way, our Father will give us the desire, wisdom, strength and intentionality to do all of this. This IS His will! But He won't answer this as a prayer to a distant God. Drawing close to Him changes us and empowers us to do His will. As we get close to Him, we become more and more like Him and we naturally change. Here's the bad news. There are no



quick fixes. You won't see a lifestyle change or a healthy balance in your time management without His help. And that Spirit-filled life only develops as we spend time and grow closer and closer to God.

The thought of doing all of the things that God calls us to do in the Christian life can look daunting and impossible. Fortunately, God's plan is meant to bring us joy and purpose and not guilt and exhaustion. All of our plans need to be woven into a healthy rhythm. So how do we do that?

We move things around. We start with easy steps. And we don't try to do everything at the same time. We have to eat, so we plan lunches and dinners around our goals. We have to drive, so we use our time more wisely, in thoughtfulness or in conversations or in worship. We decide what we don't need to do or do as much. We do some things every day, some things once a week and some things once a month. We learn to not do less important things, at least as often. And we learn to say no to things that aren't in our God-inspired priorities. We can't do everything. But we can do everything God want us to do.

Let's look at spiritual fishing. Fishing starts with prayer and that can fit in to the rest of our prayer plan. Taking time with lost people takes intentionality. But it can be scheduled into the normal flow of our lives. We have to eat. Why don't we eat with those neighbors or friends or go do something together? It doesn't have to happen every week. But it does have to be planned. Planning to talk to a neighbor to grow a friendship doesn't take a lot of time. We just have to set it as a priority and then do it!

What about discipleship? It takes time to be discipled and to disciple someone. It too has to be planned. When do we do it? Let's look for those easy answers. Can we eat together? Can we use another meeting and meet at the same time. Are their times when our family members are busy and we can use that moment for discipleship? Can we get up early and meet before the family wakes? Is there a morning or evening or lunch hour when it works best? Here is the fact. Disciplemaking isn't convenient. It takes time to build strong relationships that will end up building authentic disciples. Real discipleship involves people spending lots of time together. It won't always fit in easy corners of our lives. Friends and families hang out, play and pray together. We text and call each other, throughout the month. Deep friendships develop. But it doesn't all have to happen all the time. Each of us will develop a unique pattern in our lives that will bless us and will please our Father. That's what we want. He's commanded us to go and make disciples. We want to run hard at all of the components of being an authentic disciple and we want to enjoy it as we go. So we have to plan for change. We have to intelligently reorder our time until we feel like we are finding a healthy rhythm in our lives.



Balance

Making Authentic Disciples

Our Time

Take some time to look at these issues as they apply to your own life. Write down your answers to these important questions:

- 1) How much time do I need with God and His Word each day in order to draw close and stay to Him? When can I best do that personally?

- 2) What do I need to do to grow strong and stay strong in the Lord? Is it personal study, classes, church services or a home, fellowship, discipleship or support group? Answer the question and shape your calendar.

- 3) Am I spending the right amount of time to maintain a healthy, dynamic relationship with my spouse and/or family? Work on God's answer to that question and live out the plan.



Balance

Making Authentic Disciples

Our Time



4) How does God want me to best serve Him in my life? This could have daily, weekly, monthly and even annual implications. Again, pray and think about God's plan for your life and your service to Him. Try to distinguish the difference between what you like or want to do and what God actually wants you to do.

5) How often does God want me to be intentionally fishing for lost people? How much time do I personally need to take hanging out with people like that? When will I do it? What's my plan?

6) How much time do I give and should I give to discipling others? How many people can and should I disciple? When will I do it? What's my plan?

Go!

Making Authentic Disciples

Making Disciples

Ready to Multiply!

I've been thoroughly disciplined, I'm growing stronger and stronger in the lord and am becoming a fully developed follower of Jesus. I'm ready to multiply!

I've learned how to bring others together, on purpose, with focus, and with a plan to walk through a process that will help all of us multiply the lifestyle of an authentic disciple.

I now want to gather a team, to commit to meet regularly, to grow up intentionally, to become missional together and to help each other reflect the mind, character and priorities of Jesus.

My goal is to demonstrate consistent, Spirit-filled character and thinking, a holistic understanding of God's Word and His principles and a life given both to taking lost people to heaven and building authentic disciples.

I want to teach others to trust, to listen, to encourage, and exhort each other, with a commitment to mutual transparency and accountability.

I want to lead my group to do life together, spending valuable time, both in our group and outside our group, in order to really know, learn from and help each other decrease in our weaknesses and become strong sons and daughters.

I will help my team to commit to walk together until we all grow strong enough to multiply and create our own discipleship groups.

We will then commit to spend time with each other in prayer and community even when our group ends and we are discipling others. I am committed to stay in fellowship and accountability with those I've grown with in the past even as I lead new groups.

My Commitment

I commit to form and lead a discipling team. I will do whatever it takes to surrender to the Lord, grow strong in His Spirit and multiply that lifestyle. I want us to reflect the Mind, Character and Priorities of Jesus. I want my disciples and I to spend the rest of our lives multiplying the life of Christ in others.

Your Signature _____

Date _____

Leader's Signature _____

Date _____



Go!

Making Authentic Disciples

Making Disciples

Selecting the Right People for Friendship Evangelism

All of us must learn to fish. Jesus did say, “Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.” That passage is hard to avoid. If we choose to follow Jesus, it would seem clear that fishing is part of the foundational prescription along with everything else we learn from the Word. Not fishing would be disobedience, so if we’ve had a lifestyle of not fishing, it’s time to start a new chapter. Let’s go fishing.

There’s a lot to learn to become a good fisherman. But the hardest part is going. Once we begin fishing, we develop an appetite to learn how to do it right. Through trial and error, our motivation drives us to learn to do it well.

So let’s focus on starting. We are surrounded by lost people who desperately need to find Jesus. Where do we begin? God has an opinion. He has people in mind if you’ll stop and listen to Him. He’s more committed to saving the people around us than you and I are. Turn to the **Selecting the Right People Chart** and walk through a process.

Begin by writing down many of the people around you who don’t know Jesus. Think about your friends, relatives, work associates, and neighbors. Perhaps you can picture the parents of the friends of your children. Are you involved in sports or hobbies or an exercise club? Write down the names that come to your mind. Do this exercise with God. Ask Him to help you as you think about the lost people in your world. We are surrounded by 1000’s of them. This exercise is meant to help you get in touch with that reality. Many believers doing this exercise have discovered that they don’t even know the names of many of their neighbors or others around them. Let God stretch you as you remember God’s sacrifice for all of these dear people.

When you’ve filled the first section, move down to the second section. Who are the eight to ten potentially responsive people from your list? Ask God to open your eyes. These are the people you can easily be praying for. Then move down to the final section. Who are the three people the most responsive to prayer and friendship? Ask God whom you should invest your



Go!

Making Authentic Disciples

Making Disciples

time and energy into. We all have limited time. So it makes sense to ask God for His wisdom on where we should spend our time.

Now that you've picked out three people to deepen a friendship with, start out by praying for them all the time. Ask God to soften their hearts and to prepare them for your friendship. And ask God to soften and shape your heart for that friendship. Then become friends. Hang out. Spend regular time together. Deepen those friendships. Build trust. Earn the right to open up on the issues of life. This isn't about witnessing to people or inviting them to something. That will come later in the right time and the right way, after you are already good friends. Many of us have skipped the friendship part and we have wondered why people run away. Authentic friendship is the key to long-term evangelism, bathed in loads of prayer.

Now bring your three names to your Team Leaders and create a evangelism list of your friends for the group. Look at the **Small Group List of Friends** example. Begin to pray for all of your lost friends as a developing part of your weekly prayer life. Tell each other the stories behind each friendship so all of you can pray intelligently. And bring each other up to speed on what's happening in those relationships. Keep this central to our team time. Keep that list on the table in front of you and your discussion each time you meet. It is the Mission!





Making Disciples

Go!

Making Authentic Disciples

Selecting the Right People for Friendship Evangelism

<u>Pool of Relationships</u>				
<u>Friends</u>	<u>Relatives</u>	<u>Associates</u>	<u>Neighbors</u>	<u>Others</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Potentially Responsive Friends

Most Responsive Friends

Process

- 1) Pray for Wisdom.
- 2) Make your Lists.
- 3) Pray for your Potentially Responsive friends.
- 4) Select three friends who are Most Responsive.
- 5) Pray, Plan and CPR!



Making Disciples

Go!

Making Authentic Disciples

Small Group List of Friends

<u>Believer</u>	_____
<u>1 Pre-Christian Friend</u>	_____
<u>2 Pre-Christian Friend</u>	_____
<u>3 Pre-Christian Friend</u>	_____
<u>Believer</u>	_____
<u>1 Pre-Christian Friend</u>	_____
<u>2 Pre-Christian Friend</u>	_____
<u>3 Pre-Christian Friend</u>	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Pray regularly for each of your friends in the group and their three friends that they are sharing with. Share your progress with each other to encourage each other and to pray more accurately.

Small Group List of Friends

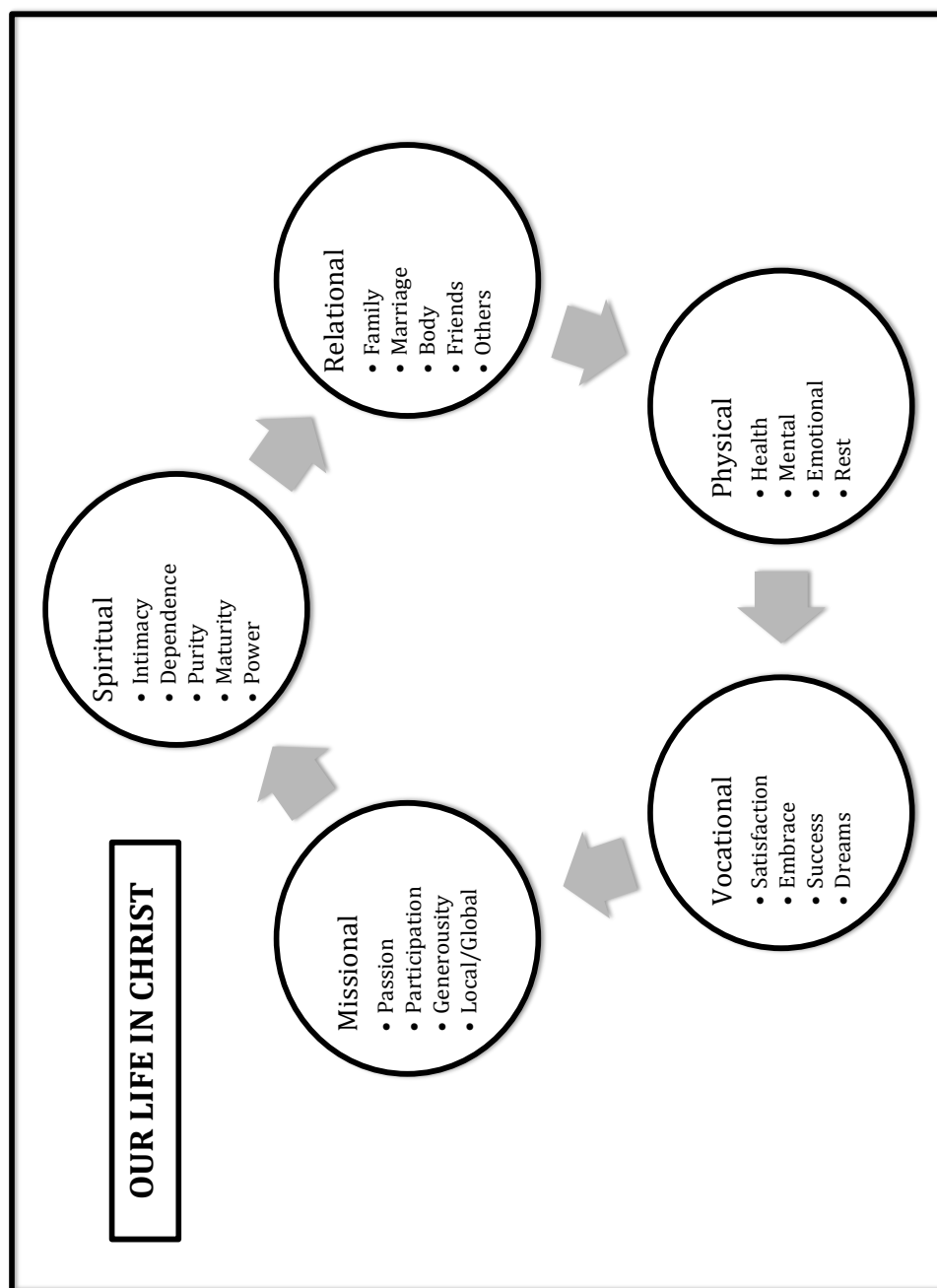
_____	_____
1 _____	1 _____
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1 _____	1 _____
2 _____	2 _____
3 _____	3 _____

Pray regularly for each of your friends in the group and their three friends that they are sharing with. Share your progress with each other to encourage each other and to pray more accurately.

Go!

Making Authentic Disciples

Making Disciples



Go!

Making Authentic Disciples

Making Disciples



Go!

Making Authentic Disciples

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