

Message Reflections

a little something extra to keep you connected to Jesus this week

Message Reflections accompany the [weekly message](#).

I've been thinking about discipleship and what that looks like in my life. Who has discipled me? Whom have I discipled in the past? Whom should I disciple now? Our church has been collectively praying for that one person in our life that we want to turn to Christ and bring into the kingdom, and our sermon this weekend was titled "Discipleship is a decision." Actively seeking souls has always felt unnatural to me and a bit forced; maybe even predatorial. An image that keeps popping into my mind is of the original Ghostbusters throwing their trap toward the ghosts and then lighting them up with their proton beams to get them in a position to suck them into the vortex of light coming from the trap and then, "Slam!" We caught another one! Of course that's absurd. The right analogy is closer to throwing a lifejacket to a drowning person. We are talking life or death here, not tricking someone into agreeing with us. Perhaps it's even more like happy couples who are always trying to set up their single friends because the love they have found is so wonderful that they want everyone to experience it.

The three questions above have helped me to keep the idea of discipleship more grounded in reality. The first, "Who has discipled me?" Many people have planted seeds at the right time in my life that finally led me to Christ in my 30's. I had religion teachers, pastors, boyfriends, friends, friends' parents, family. However, one friend, in particular, stands out. Her name is Carly. We were more like friendly neighbors than friends who lived in close proximity. She would come and talk to me on my porch some nights with our baby monitors and our mommy fears. At the time, my husband and I were haphazardly attending a large church irregularly where no one really knew us and we wouldn't be missed if we missed a few Sundays. It was exactly how we liked it. Carly just wouldn't leave me alone. She just wouldn't let up. She kept insisting that I needed to join her MOPS group at her church. She was really annoying about it. Um, no thank you. Been there, done that. I don't fit in with "church people". I really hate crafts and Amy Grant's voice. I especially don't want to pay to go to church. She said she was in charge of it that year and she wouldn't make me do crafts. She said she would even waive my fee. Looking back, I'm almost certain she paid for me out of her own pocket (by the way, she says she doesn't remember). The rest is history. She's my best friend, eventually I became part of the MOPS leadership team,

joined WRCC where MOPS was hosted, and now attend and serve every single Sunday. I am known, I am loved, I belong, and I know my Savior in a way that is personal and very precious to me. Turns out I became “church people”.

Second question, “Whom have I disciplined?” Years ago I really poured myself out for this neighbor girl. She moved in when she was 11 and when I met her I knew God wanted me to love her hard. So I did. I brought her to church numerous times, bought her a bible, a devotional, a Mercy Me CD, and committed to pray for her as long as I had breath (still do to this day). I fed her, hugged her, included her, and spoke truth to her every chance I got. She graduated high school and left her home, never speaking to her parents again. I’d see her walking down the street from time to time. She became addicted to fentanyl and had her child removed from her home. I continued to text her my prayers, ask her if she had everything she needed, to invite her to church. She never took me up on any of it. Recently she started to return my texts and she has gotten clean, gotten her child back and attends another church in the area. I’m not sure if any of it is true, but I know God has a plan for her and I was maybe just a small part of it. I really wanted to have the story be that I brought her to Christ, that I got to baptize her, and that she comes home for Sunday lunch every week and her baby calls me an endearing nickname. It’s not the way it went. I am so disappointed that God didn’t give me that. I trust He has a better plan and I will rest in that. Truth is, I’m better at discipleship when it’s more organic. I disciple my children, husband, friends, and co-workers. I also feel like I cheat a little bit when I teach 3rd grade Sunday school. They are a captive audience for about an hour a week!

The third question is “Whom will I disciple now?” I’m going to try the Jesus approach from Matthew 4. I will spend time with the Lord, in His word, more regularly so He can disciple me daily. I will make a decision about who that person will be. Thanks to our 1:41 initiative, I already have a person I have been praying for. Now I will actively seek her out. I will spend time with her and ask her if I can talk to her about Jesus. I already have a relationship with her. I have already shown my love for her, and have shown up when she needed it. My faith is not a secret and has been evident from the beginning. I know the enemy would prefer I stay quiet. Part of my hesitancy is that I don’t believe I am “shiny” enough to attract anyone to Jesus. I haven’t fixed myself up enough. I still have sin problems and I still have patterns that I haven’t conquered. There is a thin line between humility and self-doubt. I’m hoping that allowing Christ to disciple me more regularly will embolden me and help me step into this conversation. I will wait for the Holy Spirit to move and it will be perfect.

- 1) Who has disciplined you? How did they do it? How did you feel about that? What was the result?
- 2) Whom have you disciplined? Did it go how you hoped? Did it go as expected?
- 3) Have you made a decision to disciple someone? How will you go about doing that?
- 4) Discipleship can be organic (happen in a slow and natural way, systematically even). Like the example of the captive audience on Sunday mornings, what are you already doing that feels like an easy discipleship win?

