

## **MULTIPLY DISCIPLES**

*Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Timothy 2:2, Dave Geldart, 2024-09-22, Tru Community Church*

### **1) Welcome**

- a) Connect Card
- b) Giving

### **2) Announcements**

- a) **Next Sun – Family Sunday** (still have nursery and pre-k)
  - i) Discipling the next generations
  - ii) We're going to be having kids and youth help with different aspects of our gathering.
  - iii) As well as having activity bags for the younger ones.
  - iv) Not only does this give some of our vols a break, but also allows us to focus as a church on a critically important aspect of our life and mission → engaging the next generations.
- b) **Membership Potluck Oct 13** – we're excited to finally develop and lay out before you a process for becoming official members of Tru Community Church! Our heart is that it would be meaningful and helpful for both you and our church as we head into this next season together. IN the future we'll present this in a special class. But for this first time, we want to have fun with it and go through it all together in a potluck after church. Then there will be an opportunity for you to choose to become official members (whether on the spot or later on). Even if you choose not to, totally fine!, come join us to hear and learn more.
  - i) Plan to come – bring something Good to share.
- c) **Family Financial Update → DC and Michelle**
  - i) After done, they pray for teaching

### **3) [1] Multiply Series**

- a) Memory verse challenge
  - i) [2] Then Read Matthew 28:19-20
- b) Last wk: Multiply Churches

### **4) Today: Moving a step inward: the backbone of multiplying churches → MULTIPLY DISCIPLES**

### **5) [3] (If we're going to MULTIPLY: Go and Make Disciples...) WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?**

- a) **Dship in Ancient World**
  - i) Greek word for Disciple – *mathetes* → student or learner
  - ii) Widespread concept in the GrecoRoman world – secular term
    - (1) Sophists, Philosophers had disciples
- b) **Dship in Biblical Times**

i) **Isaiah talks about his disciples -- 700BC (Is 8:16)**

**c) Dship in early NT times**

i) Also used by Jewish Rabbis to train others

(1) Pharisees had disciples (mat 22:16)

(2) Paul was a disciple of Gamaliel (famous rabbi – Acts 22:3)

(3) John the Baptist had disciples (Mat 11:2, 14:12, Mk 2:18)

(4) As we know, Jesus also had disciples (The 12)

ii) **Sense of this training is much more than transmitting just knowledge**, available through classes or personal investigation.

(1) Rabbis spent years with their disciples.

(2) The goal was the complete shaping of a new rabbi, knowledge, character, values, wisdom. To produce a new kind of person.

(3) The great amount of personal attention this took meant that Rabbis would focus on no more than a few disciples at a time.

**d) 1<sup>st</sup>, general sense that any follower of Christ is Jesus' disciple.**

i) General discipleship is a believer's process and journey into greater Christlikeness

ii) Another way to say it: 'as a disciple I am learning from Jesus to live my life as he would live my life if he were I.' – Dallas Willard "Living a Transformed Life Adequate to our Calling"

**e) But more used is the sense of personal discipleship: It's how we're going to use the term today.**

f) **In short** – Discipleship is the life-on-life personal process of becoming more like Christ in context of intentional relationships.

**6) WHAT DO WE TEND TO THINK OF DSHIP TODAY?**

a) Only for the elite. For paid ministers.

b) Only for college students in coffee shops

c) Just for folks who have extra time. – it's optional.

d) Just weird in general – sounds really awkward and unhealthy. Controlling.

e) Something I'm not going to do.

**f) My reluctance to begin discipling...**

i) Even as I was being disciplined, and knew my next step in following JC's call on my life was to step forward and begin discipling others...

ii) I drug my feet for a long, long time. Even as it was getting awkward. And I was obviously resisting.

## 7) HOW'D WE GET HERE?

### a) Dship was practiced early on quite pervasively in the church

- i) We know Paul had disciples (many) – Acts 9:25 →
- ii) Others like Apollos, Barnabas, Timothy, etc implicitly
- iii) It was the primary method of training new believers to maturity!

### b) Then the idea of personal discipling gradually went into decline.

- i) As heresy became a real problem, church leaders tried to protect the church and the integrity of the Gospel Message by emphasizing the higher position of clergy.
- ii) These clergy had the special call and ability to lead the church and serve as mediators between them and God.
- iii) Over time this got more and more extreme, eventually where only clergy had the right to read and interpret the Bible.
- iv) Translating the Bible into local languages even became illegal!
  - (1) William Tyndale, who made the 1<sup>st</sup> English Bible, was executed for doing it (early 1500s)
- v) So, as you can imagine, when laypeople are not allowed to read and learn the bible, the basis for personal discipleship and discipling vanishes.
- vi) The clergy-laity distinction removed personal discipleship from the hands of common Christians.
  - (1) Since that time, when common Christians were removed from major areas of church ministry, personal discipleship became meaningless, and forgotten.
- vii) This held true for most of the last almost 2000 years!

### c) THEN, in the last few 100 years or so, Discipleship has begun to reemerge!

#### i) Rediscovered and used by people like John Wesley

- ii) STARTING in Parachurch organizations – campus groups! More recently.
  - (1) Dawson Trotman who founded the Navigators
  - (2) Bill Bright with Campus Crusade for Christ
- iii) In 1960s, Robert Coleman wrote his modern classic “The Master Plan of Evangelism” in which he advocated a return to the biblical pattern of discipleship.
  - (1) There’s a reason it’s still in wide use today.

### d) But in the 1970s, discipleship was discredited in America by the “Shepherding Movement”

- i) Hyper controlling.
- ii) Thought that if you learned to obey a human authority in all areas of your life, you’d learn to accept God’s overarching authority.

- iii) As you can imagine, it got weird, and died out.
- iv) But unfortunately it left a lingering suspicion about discipleship
- v) Even today, many Christians believe personal discipleship is cultic and unbiblical, largely because of the fallout from this movement.
- e) **Today though personal discipleship is driving the explosion of the church in areas like Latin America and Asia**, most western churches are struggling to get traction with the broad pool of their people.
- f) **Also, our culture is set against discipleship in other ways:**
  - i) Our western desire for self-sufficiency
  - ii) Our desire for comfort, ease, and self-focus
  - iii) A consumer mindset even in relation to engagement with Church
  - iv) And our diminishing value of real person-to-person relationships and relational skills
- g) **SO, if you struggle to think discipleship is for you, you're not alone! And there's good reasons why you might think that way.**
  - i) But as with anything we talk about, we can't just end with the trends of history, culture, or our own thoughts. We Must ask:

#### **8) [4] So, what does the Bible Say about Discipleship?**

- a) **Jesus, God himself on earth in human flesh, chose personal discipling as his main ministry strategy.**
  - i) HE INVESTED THE bulk of his time in just a dozen guys! And within them, he focused extra on three!
- b) **Then, after he died and rose again, as he was going back to heaven, his last command to his followers was The Great Commission,**
- c) **[5] in Matthew 28:19-20, calling on them to do the same:**
  - i) He commanded his followers to make disciples who make disciples who make disciples.
    - (1) Teaching them to observe all I've commanded you (including this call to go make disciples).
- d) **Of all the apostles in the early church era, we have the most info about Paul. And we know Paul made disciples who made disciples.**
  - i) His most famous, Timothy:
  - ii) **[6] And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others (2 Tim. 2: 2)**
    - (1) **Notice Paul was concerned with multiplying disciples down through 4 generations:**
      - 1) himself 2) Timothy 3) "reliable people" and 4) "others."

iii) **Paul also urged women to disciple other women** (Tit. 2: 3), a practice unknown in Judaism.

**e) Paul also gives the GOAL of discipleship**

i) [7] Col 1:28 <sup>28</sup> *Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.*

ii) The Goal is to present to God (more about this later) everyone mature in Christ.

iii) [8] And again in Ephesians 4

(1) The Goal is Maturity! -- specifically that ... (v 13) *“we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”*

iv) We’re not merely making disciples of ourselves.

(1) We’re helping make disciples of Jesus.

(2) And by God’s great grace, He’ll use us. – to make little Christs. Christians.

(3) Imperfect through we may be

(a) Paul → I’m the worst of all sinners (1 Tim 1:15)

(b) Imitate Me as I imitate Christ! (1 Cor 11:1)

**9) WHY Discipleship?**

a) Why might JC have chosen personal discipleship his main method of reaching and impacting the world with the Good News?

i) Why not public debates and sermons (JC did these)

ii) Why not Bible Studies or Events, or Programs?

(1) Growth through addition

**b) BECAUSE HE KNOWS SOMETHING WE’VE FORGOTTEN, ESPECIALLY HERE IN THE WEST:**

**10)[9] BECAUSE OF The Inherent power of Multiplication**

a) what might seem insignificant and inefficient really has incredible power.

b) [10] McCallum in Organic Discipleship:

(1) “The period from the death of Jesus until the end of the first century was the most fruitful in the history of the church. During these few decades, Christianity spread clear across the Roman Empire and even penetrated into Africa, the Parthian Empire, and India. The best estimates put the number of Christians at the end of the first century at around one million. That’s an increase of two thousand times the number of Christians before Pentecost (perhaps 500). And all of this growth was facilitated by the process

[11] of discipleship. Without mass media, without advertising, without church buildings, and without seminaries, the primitive church expanded at a rate never equaled in the nineteen centuries since. If the same rate of growth had continued, everyone on earth would have been a Christian before the end of the second century."

c) Multiplication is far more powerful than addition. (discipleship vs mass evangelism and attractational events)

d) **Consider this case study to illustrate**

i) [12] 2 churches (Cody Tupps introduced this concept last week)

ii) **1<sup>st</sup> traditional church goes after large scale growth through addition**

(1) And are able to win 25,000 new believers EVERY YEAR

(2) That's 50K every 2 yrs

(3) That'd be a pretty incredible megachurch!

(a) Approx. the population of Manhattan every couple years!!!!

iii) **2<sup>nd</sup> church relies instead on multiplication through personal discipling.**

(1) Slow going.

(2) Each member disciples 1 new person every 2 years.

iv) Both start w 30 ppl

v) [13] **End of yr 2 the megachurch now has 50,000ppl! incredible**

(1) That's Bill Snyder Family Stadium with every seat filled!

(2) The discipling church has 60. 2 small LIFE Groups.

vi) [14] **After 6 yrs, the megachurch has 150K members!**

(1) About the population of KCK

(2) The discipling church has 240.

vii) [15] **At 10 yrs Megachurch quarter of a mil**

(1) Dmaking church still under 1,000

viii) [16] **At 20 yrs Megachurch has half a mil**

(1) Dmaking church up to about 30K

ix) [17] **Around the spring of the 29<sup>th</sup> yr, the discipling church catches up to the megachurch at around 700K**

x) [18] **By year 56**

(1) The megachurch has nearly 1.5 million ppl! The population of Hawaii! OR half the entire population of KS!

(2) [19] **But the multiplying disciples church has reached every human on the planet.**

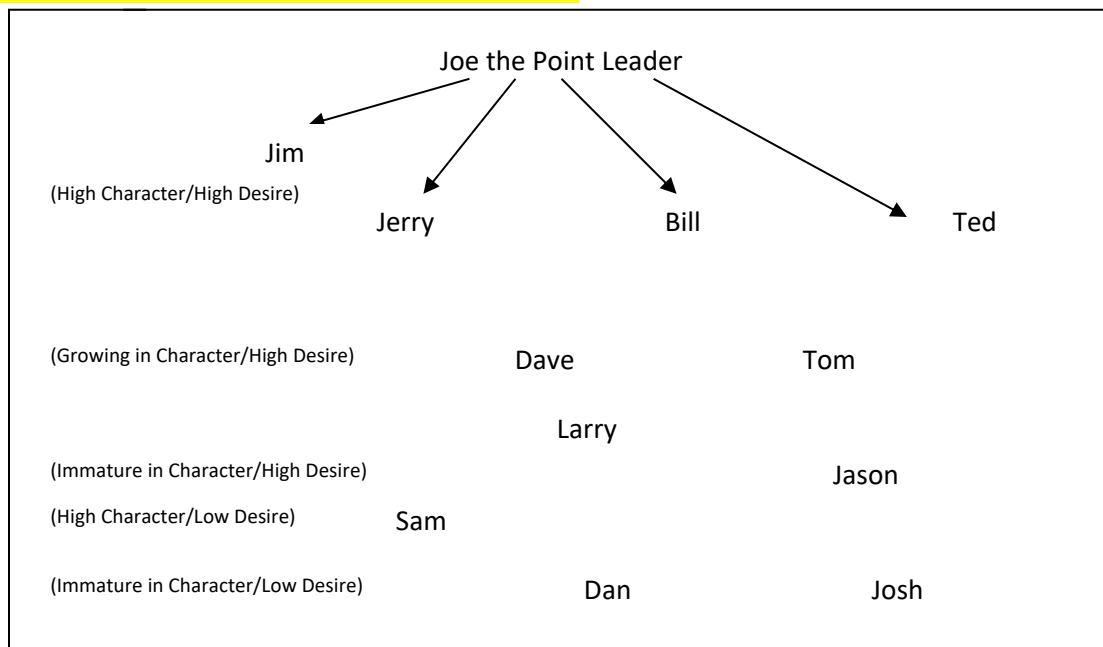
(a) >8 Billion ppl!

- xi) **Of course this doesn't take into account any failure or setbacks or losses**, but you see the inherent POWER in this seemingly low-powered, slow start MULTIPLICATION method of spreading the Gospel.
- xii) It can give us the perspective to see how if we just invest our lives in even 1 person every couple of years, or even each decade, the impact of our seemingly puny investment could pay tremendous dividends in God's hands over time for the Kingdom.
- (1) **Just imagine the ripple effect your life could have as you pour into even just a few people.**
- (a) The impact they could have on others, and they on others, and they on others, some of whom could be leaders of nations, evangelists of their generation, shepherds of entire flocks who themselves invest in others.
- (2) The potential impact of your life, poured into even a few, is staggering.
- xiii) PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS ARE WORTH IT!

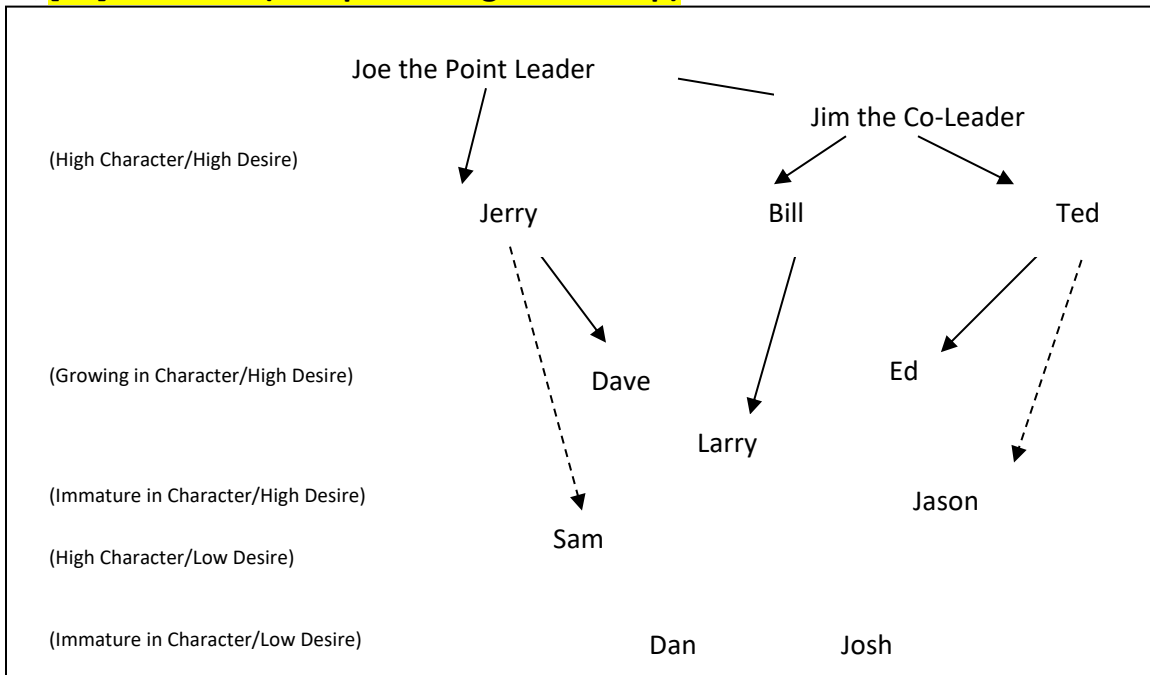
**11)[20] Why Dship? → More people in the church get engaged, cared for, and trained**

**a) IMPORTANCE of dev web of Dship** (old mentor of mine, Todd Stewart)

**b) [21] FIGURE 1 (Traditional Leadership)**



c) **[22] FIGURE 2 (Disciplemaking Leadership)**



**12)[23] WHY DSHIP? → Because of JOY FOR ETERNITY**

a) **[24] In 1<sup>st</sup> Thes 2, Paul is writing to a small church he started – read: disciplined. Look what he says:**

- i) 8 We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. ... 19 For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? 20 For you are our glory and joy.

(1) He uses the same language of the people he invested in in Philippi (phil 4:1)

ii) **What can we boast in when all is said and done and we're finally, FINALLY, before Jesus himself? What will be our crown, our GLORY, our joy in THAT moment?**

**(1) People.**

- (a) People we've invested deeply in.
- (b) Poured our lives into.
- (c) Not only the Gospel of God, but our very lives as well.

**(2) Let me share an image that has stuck with me –a quote that really drive this into my heart**

- (a) I think about this frequently as I disciple others, especially when I'm tempted to give up.

**(3) [25] Ajith Fernando, Call to Joy and Pain**

- (a) Here starts summarizing some points we've already discovered:



*The verb used in Paul's description of the goal of discipling is significant. He says, ". . . that we may present everyone mature in Christ" (Col. 1:28, emphasis added). Several noted scholars...have pointed out that Paul is speaking here about the Second Coming of Christ. We are working toward a goal that will be realized only at the end of time. Our great joy will be to present the fruit of our labors to God at the judgment. On that day the people we invested in will be to us what Paul called the Philippians: "my joy and crown" (Phil. 4:1).*

**[26]** *When my daughter was little, I used to take her to her preschool on my motorcycle each morning (motorcycles are the standard means of economical transport for middle-class people in Sri Lanka). I would often see a lady who brought about four little children to school in a van. They would get out of the van with her and then hold on to her, each one holding a finger as she led them to school. I often think this is the way I would like to go to heaven - taking along with me several people in whose lives I have invested.*

- iii) **It's great to be good at your job.** To get good grades in school. To advocate for environmental stewardship. To enjoy cheering your heart out for the Cats or the Chiefs.  
(1) Great to work hard and provide well for your family
- iv) **But in the end, when your eyes close for the last time,** when you wake up and see your Lord, Jesus, whom your heart has longed to see every moment of every day since you came to believe, when the lives of men are laid bare and we each give an account to him for how we used the time and talents he gave us.... All of that will burn away.  
(1) All that will be left will be people. Like little children, holding onto our fingers.  
(2) These people who you poured into. Who you invited into ... in your messy living room while the toddlers screamed. The people you let interrupt your schedule. Who you sat on the porch with. Who you talked with for hours. Cried with. Cried for. Wrestled in prayer for.  
(3) Disciplined.
- v) **Each of them made in the image of God Almighty.** Every one of them. Incredibly valuable. And they're worth our time. And our lives.
- vi) **That is the spirit of discipleship. THE VISION OF DISCIPLEMAKING!**

13) **I'm not here this morning to EXHORT or compel you to obey Christ and make disciples.**

- a) Not pushing you to do the right thing and ask someone to meet with you.
- b) **I'm inviting you into joy.**
  - i) **Both in this life and in the eternal life to come!**

- ii) Inviting you into glory and honor that before the Lord Himself endures.
- iii) Into the kind of life you never regret (at least for long).
  - (1) The kind of life that's never boring. Often confusing. Frequently painful. Haltingly beautiful. And infinitely fulfilling. JOY!
  - (2) Rippling out into our neighborhoods and our city, our area, our region, our county, and across the globe to far places and people yet unborn. Rippling through time on and on until Jesus comes back and the next stage of history begins anew!

**(3) MY HOPE today is to stir your affections, to arouse your DESIRE for this kind of life.**

(a) **To help you get in touch with your soul's HUNGER** for this discipling lifestyle your maker has called you to.

**(4) Because when we can access our desires, the longing of our hearts, obedience takes care of itself.**

(5) And incredible, Kingdom-of-God level stuff breaks out all around us

(6) And we're hooked.

(7) This is something I could give my life to.

(8) And the Kingdom Grows....

**14) Back to my story: I resisted the call to step forward with making disciples. So afraid.**

- a) But once I got going, even though it WAS somewhat awkward to start out (we named it!)
- b) I've met with and discipled many since that day about 15 years ago.
- c) And though it's been hard at times, and I've been unsure, and there's been plenty of tears and anxiety

**d) It's honestly been and still is one of the greatest joys of my life.**

- e) I can never go back. I've tasted the good life. I've tasted the joy and meaning and purpose. The profound. The life changing.
  - i) And I'm spoiled for anything less.
  - ii) I've tasted and seen.
  - iii) AND YOU CAN TOO. WE CAN AS A CHURCH FAMILY!

**15) How do we move forward from here?**

- a) **This is not a how-to sermon on discipleship. I want you to see why it's a core value of ours.**
  - i) **We're going to come back with part 2 of this in a couple weeks and talk about that!**
  - ii) Get in touch with your desire
  - iii) Or your desire to desire!

## 16)[27] Applications

### a) [28] SEE YOURSELF AS PART OF THIS MULTIPLYING MOVEMENT!!!!

- i) This isn't to someone else. This is for you. It's a call. And a gift.
- ii) **Maybe you're here this morning and you've never yet become a disciple of Jesus Himself.** You've never told Him you want to put your trust and hope in him saving and directing your life.
  - (1) If that's you this morning, and you're hearing the call of Jesus to follow him, don't resist that call.
  - (2) Why not respond to him even now. In your mind, tell Jesus what you're thinking, and how you want him to save you from your empty life of self-rule, and lead you as one of his own.
  - (3) If you tell God that this morning, the scriptures promise that He hears you, and will not delay to come to you. His Spirit will come to live in you immediately and begin to make you into a new person!
  - (4) If that's you this morning, please tell someone about it. Someone you came with. Or let us know so we can help you enter into this process of discipleship and help you grow in your new life.

### b) [29] Identify points of resistance

- i) What points of resistance do you feel?
- ii) What fears and hesitations come up?
- iii) What might it cost you to follow Jesus into discipleship and discipling.
- iv) What is still confusing or unclear?

### c) [30] Identify glimmers of desire.

- i) What about this discipling lifestyle seems enticing. Good. Desirable.
- ii) What kind of life might you be missing out on if you resist the call to discipleship today?
  - (a) If you were to close your eyes for the final time tonight, and take that walk into eternity, who'd be holding on to your fingers?

### d) [31] Pray for God to lead you to a next step with multiplying disciples.

- i) Actively pray for God to lead you into this discipleship and discipling lifestyle!
- ii) Pray for God to show you a next step he wants you to take

#### (1) MORE ABOUT THIS IN A COUPLE WEEKS

### e) [32] Pray for God to grow and develop a web of discipleship in OUR CHURCH!

- i) **If we continue to head the ongoing call of Jesus to discipleship, both individually and as a church body, who knows what God might do in and through us.**
  - (1) How our neighborhoods might change.

- (2) How our experience of church can move from boredom to excitement and deep satisfaction.
- (3) How Tru might continue to grow in influence and reputation in our city and area as a church who really loves and engages people well.

**17)[33] PRAY – for God’s power, and for enticement to joy → for a web of dship of multiple generations to become normal here at Tru**

*a)* **Bring Band Up**



**multiply**

GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES



## matthew 28: 19-20

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





**multiply**

GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES

**what does the bible say?**





# what does the bible say?

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# what does the bible say?

**2 Timothy 2:2** And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.



# what does the bible say?

**Colossians 1:28** Him [Jesus] we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.



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**Ephesians 4:13** ...we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ



# the power of multiplication



# the power of multiplication

The period from the death of Jesus until the end of the first century was the most fruitful in the history of the church. During these few decades, Christianity spread clear across the Roman Empire and even penetrated into Africa, the Parthian Empire, and India. The best estimates put the number of Christians at the end of the first century at around one million. That's an increase of two thousand times the number of Christians before Pentecost (perhaps 500). And all of this growth was facilitated by the process



*Organic Discipleship*, DENNIS MCCALLUM



# the power of multiplication

of discipleship. Without mass media, without advertising, without church buildings, and without seminaries, the primitive church expanded at a rate never equaled in the nineteen centuries since. If the same rate of growth had continued, everyone on earth would have been a Christian before the end of the second century.



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# the power of multiplication

**Megachurch**

*adds 25,000 each year*

Start

30

**Small Group**

*each discipless 1 / 2 years*

Start

30



# the power of multiplication

## Megachurch

*adds 25,000 each year*

Start	30
Year 2	50,000

## Small Group

*each discipless 1 / 2 years*

Start	30
Year 2	60

# the power of multiplication

## Megachurch

*adds 25,000 each year*

Start	30
Year 2	50,000
Year 6	150,000

## Small Group

*each discipless 1 / 2 years*

Start	30
Year 2	60
Year 6	240

# the power of multiplication

## Megachurch

*adds 25,000 each year*

Start	30
Year 2	50,000
Year 6	150,000
Year 10	250,000

## Small Group

*each discipless 1 / 2 years*

Start	30
Year 2	60
Year 6	240
Year 10	960

# the power of multiplication

## Megachurch

*adds 25,000 each year*

Start	30
Year 2	50,000
Year 6	150,000
Year 10	250,000
Year 20	500,000

## Small Group

*each discipless 1 / 2 years*

Start	30
Year 2	60
Year 6	240
Year 10	960
Year 20	30,720

# the power of multiplication

## Megachurch

*adds 25,000 each year*

Start	30
Year 2	50,000
Year 6	150,000
Year 10	250,000
Year 20	500,000
Year 29	700,000

## Small Group

*each disciples 1 / 2 years*

Start	30
Year 2	60
Year 6	240
Year 10	960
Year 20	30,720
Year 29	700,000

# the power of multiplication

## Megachurch

*adds 25,000 each year*

Start	30
Year 2	50,000
Year 6	150,000
Year 10	250,000
Year 20	500,000
Year 29	700,000
Year 56	1,400,000

## Small Group

*each disciples 1 / 2 years*

Start	30
Year 2	60
Year 6	240
Year 10	960
Year 20	30,720
Year 29	700,000
Year 56	

# the power of multiplication

## Megachurch

*adds 25,000 each year*

Start	30
Year 2	50,000
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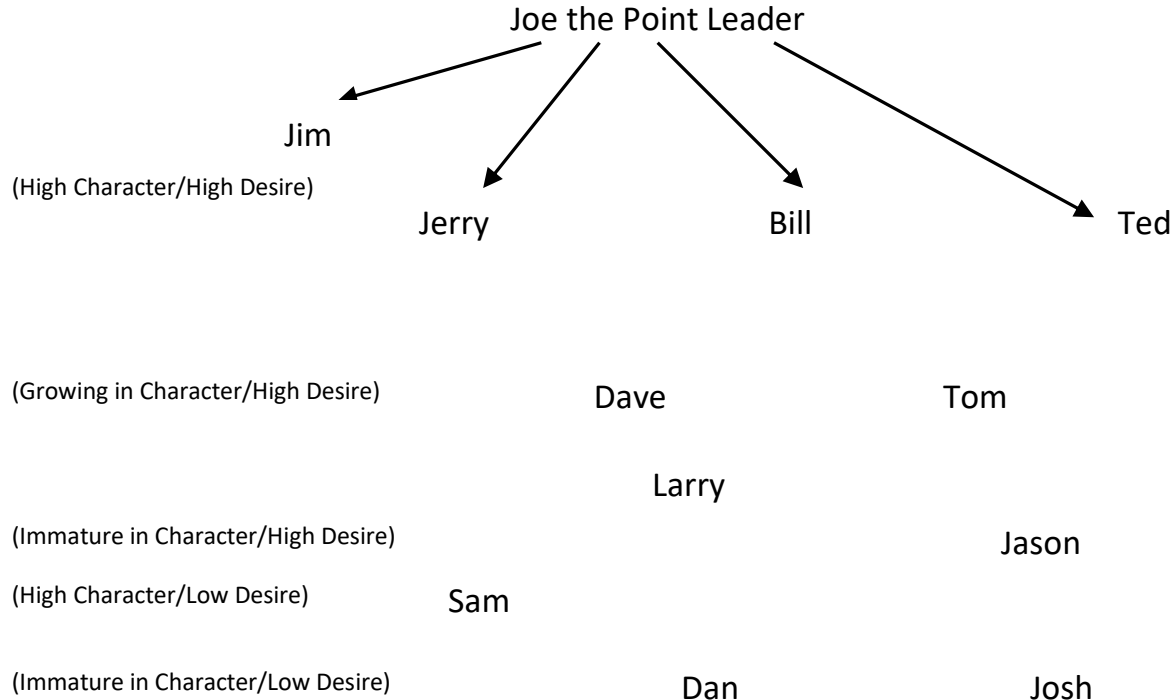
Start	30
Year 2	60
Year 6	240
Year 10	960
Year 20	30,720
Year 29	700,000
Year 56	<b>8,053,063,680!</b>

**more people get engaged**

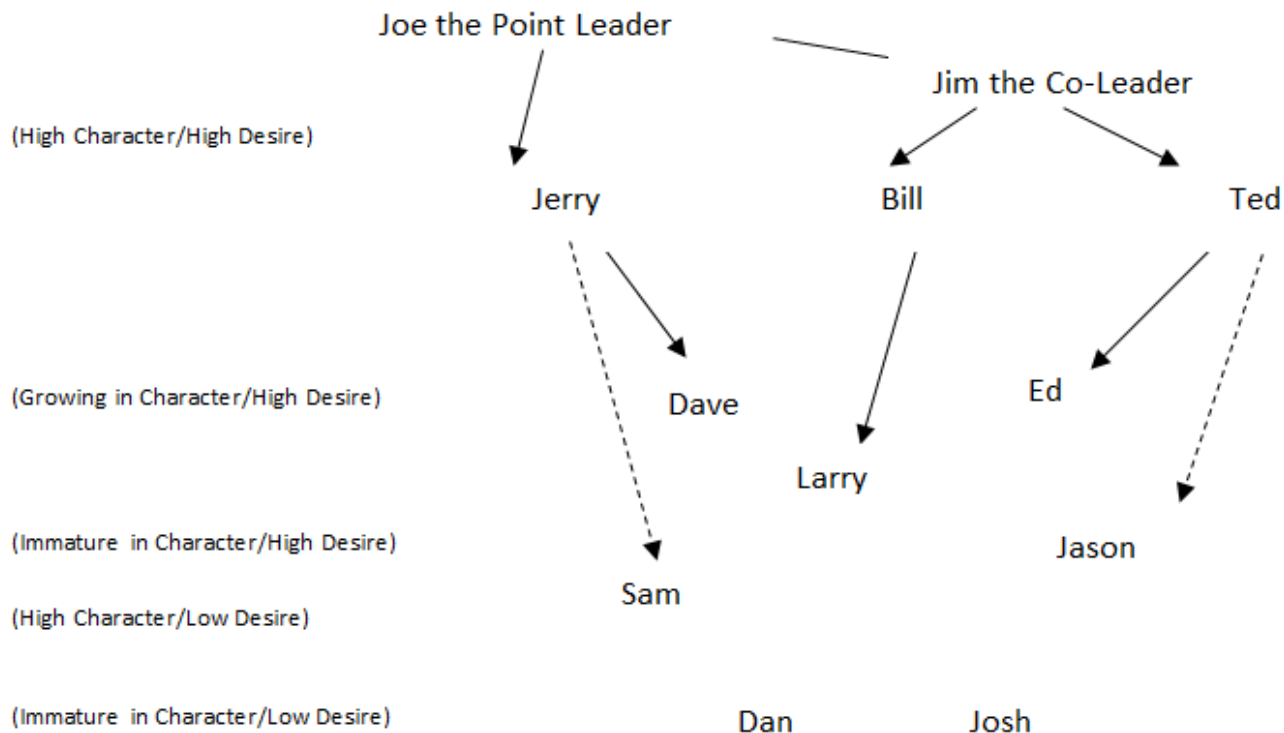




# more people get engaged



# more people get engaged



**joy for eternity**



# joy for eternity

**1 Thessalonians 2** <sup>8</sup> We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. ... <sup>19</sup> For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? <sup>20</sup> For you are our glory and joy.



# joy for eternity

The verb used in Paul's description of the goal of discipling is significant. He says, "... that we may *present* everyone mature in Christ" (Col. 1:28). Several noted scholars ...have pointed out that Paul is speaking here about the Second Coming of Christ. We are working toward a goal that will be realized only at the end of time. Our great joy will be to present the fruit of our labors to God at the judgment. On that day the people we invested in will be to us what Paul called the Philippians: "my joy and crown" (Phil. 4:1).



**THE CALL TO JOY AND PAIN, AJITH FERNANDO**



# joy for eternity

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# applications



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2. **Identify** points of resistance.
3. **Identify** glimmers of desire.
4. **Pray** for God to lead you to a next step with multiplying disciple.
5. **Pray** for God to develop a web of discipleship in our church.







**multiply**

GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES