



# WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

(Next class Saturday, August 30<sup>th</sup> / 10-12noon)

## WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

1. A follower of Jesus Christ.
2. A student of the Word
3. Someone who tells others about Jesus and His teachings
4. A person who is discipline to align his life with Christ
5. Someone who obeys the commands of Jesus
6. Someone who seeks to advance God's kingdom
7. Someone who models the very nature (person and character) of Christ
8. Someone who is willing to sacrifice their life for the gospel
9. Someone who is God like, God chosen, God driven

## WHAT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF DISCIPLE MAKING?

1. As Christians it's our responsibility
2. Your life as a witness or testimony to what you're sharing/teaching
3. A mentoring process
4. It is a command and not suggestion
5. A methodical process to disciple making
6. Centered in Jesus Christ (Matt 28:19...'go therefore')
7. A personal reproduction of the command to produce followers of Christ
8. How to model when discipling : be passionate, encouraging, self-controlled people
9. Advancing God's plan and not my own
10. Extended to all nations – expansive
11. A never-ending 'intentional' process
12. God gives the ability and the knowledge and desire to impact someone else's life (empowers)
13. Have a firm relationship with the Lord

## WHAT DOES DISCIPLE-MAKING LOOK LIKE AT THE CHURCH OF CHICAGO?

1. Through teaching/classes which teach God's word, to make us a better Christian, so I can go and speak with confidence
2. The church encourages members to participate in ministry
3. An on-going process



4. Encourages us to be accountable for ourselves regarding what we've learn
5. Genuine Outreach from the church after visiting (personal welcome call)
6. Discipleship here is based on relationships, we are a family
7. Pastor spending time personally with men to grow them so that they in turn pass it own (grow and repeat)
8. Heartfelt greetings, sincere expressions of concern/love
9. Missions and Outreach – Basketball Camp, Urban Camp, Big City Extravaganza

### HOW DO WE MEASURE EFFECTIVENESS IN DISCIPLE MAKING?



It will may time for a person to move from unbelief to belief in Christ and then to a completely committed disciple.

*Note: Some people may have legitimate questions about Jesus or simply may need to take time to process this faith. Other may be battling with cultural and even family pressure to remain within the boundaries of what they have grown up with.*

How are you in a disciple making relationship with...are you in a disciple making relationship? **We all should be in a disciple making relationship!**

### PASTOR SPENCER'S COMMENTS :

All of the above comments were made by all in attendance in class as the questions were asked. The idea is to work out these thoughts in community. In community there are ideas that you may not have thought of without the input of others. While some ideas may not be theologically correct the purpose of group interaction is to move us in that direction. Therefore, most of the ideas were written down.

Following are my thoughts and biblical alignment of the ideas.

#### **1. The answers to first question, as well as the rest, demonstrates a great depth of spiritual maturity. "What is a disciple?"**

- As stated in the answers above it is certain that a disciple of Christ is someone who follows Jesus in word, deed while seeking to advance His kingdom.
- We must remember, however, that everyone is on a different pace to get there. It should mean that people are passionate to live a life for Christ but this must be worked out in the life of each believer



## 2. Discipleship is truly the responsibility of the disciple. If you are being disciplined then it is the responsibility of the leader to help you move to greater intimacy and ministry with Jesus Christ.

- Ultimately every believer has the responsibility to disciple other people.
- This must not be taken lightly. This is how the gospel spreads and that is why Jesus does not whisk us away to heaven as soon as we accept Him as our redeemer.
- The cornerstone verse for us is Matthew 28:19-20: ***"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age"*** (Mat 28:19-20, ESV)
- This is a charge from Jesus for us to partner with Him in fulfilling the Great Commission. I like was someone from class said about discipleship, *"It is a command and not a suggestion."*
- A. B. Bruce said, *"Except in the case of the twelve [original disciples], following Jesus from place to place was optional, not compulsory; and in most cases it was probably occasional. It was the natural consequence of faith, when the object of faith, the center of the circle, was Himself in motion..."*
- Unfortunately some who follow Christ today still have this mindset even after accepting Him. It could be that they are following Him as one would follow someone on Twitter. Not a real desire to interact or engage but simply to be a consumer of information.
- There were many who called themselves Jesus' disciples when He ministered. But as Jesus asked for a full commitment this is how the Scripture said they responded, ***"After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him"*** (John 6:66).
- It is always good as long as we are getting our miracles and other personal needs met. But as soon as the Lord asks us for a deeper commitment we bail.
- If we really think a little more deeply about this then we discover it was the reason He mentored the disciples for three years. The original disciples spent three years under the Master's tutelage.
- But we must also remember that even after three years, the crucifixion and the resurrection they were still foggy concerning this spiritual journey they were required to walk.
- As disciples who make disciples we are involved in a process which is truly unending because we are in it to advance God's kingdom and not our own personal agendas. This is always difficult because some people think it is always about them.
- The health and growth of our church partially depends upon our willingness to disciple or mentor others into and throughout the faith. It is not enough to follow Jesus on Twitter.

## 3. What does disciple-making look like at The Church of Chicago?

- Without a doubt we are well on the way to becoming strong in our discipleship process but it must continue to move away from being solely Pastor Spencer focused. We don't have to be seminary trained in order to teach others in the faith. But we must dedicate ourselves to



the Scriptures and avail ourselves to the Lord and His people. Now, you may decide to dedicate yourself to one individual and that's acceptable.

- Consider this: Our discipling must include someone who is not a part of our immediate family. It is easy to say that I will focus my attention only on my children but your life can also speak to others.
- When we think of the disciples rarely, if ever, do we even consider the fact that they had families. Why wouldn't they? They were men after all. Paul said, "**Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas**" (1 Cor 9:5). When it was time to be with the family they were with family. When it was time to be with Jesus they were with Jesus. Somehow in our mindsets it's always either one or the other.
- Their time with Jesus was not just in devotion. "*I spend my time with the Lord every day.*" The time they spent with Jesus was also developing the capacity to become His true disciples.
- The disciples made mistakes along the way and so will you and I. We make missteps with the Lord and missteps with one another. But Jesus was right there with them to correct and love them. There are times when we must overlook a fault with the hopes they will self-correct through God's grace. If not we engage and help them along.
- But we understand that we are an integral part of the process on both sides. We are disciples on the one hand and "disciplers" on the other.
- Great sensitivity or great callousness may indicate great immaturity. Complacency, passiveness or aggression also means there is much heart work to be accomplished.
- As disciples we have a Master and a mission. If we never knew what to do we could possibly make an excuse. If we never knew the Master it wouldn't make a difference anyway.

## **DISCIPLESHIP AND LEADERSHIP**

We spent much of our time talking about discipleship during this leadership session. This was necessary because leadership isn't just about who has what title and who can tell who what to do. Frankly, if a leader doesn't embrace the mandate of Jesus to disciple then they may not be a leader in God's church. When an employee has a project to accomplish they are directed by someone who has a bigger picture. Therefore they must accomplish the given task. If that given task is not accomplished or rejected then that person does not represent the company in good faith. Discipleship is no different. Jesus didn't tell us to pick and choose whether or not to disciple. He commanded it.

As a church we have come a long way but this area of calling others into discipleship and discipling others is stubborn. This is my prayer: "*Lord Jesus, '...though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete'*" (2 Co 10:3-6).



God bless you all and I'll see you the next time God's Word is opened.