

Transformed by being ON his mission

By Brian Benoit

Day 1 – Sharing the Gospel

When someone tells you that you need to share Jesus (or share the Gospel) with other people, what is your gut reaction? How do you immediately feel inside? Be honest. And, as a follow up question, why do you think you feel that way?

I used to believe that if I lived a “good Christian life” in the world, that would be “testimony” enough to bring people to Jesus. After all, Francis of Assisi said, “Preach the Gospel at all times. If necessary, use words.” (He actually didn’t. He also used a lot of words in his Gospel preaching, which he did daily.)

While living out what we believe is definitely necessary to show people what Jesus is like, I have become convinced that living in a certain way without talking about the “why” can be a hindrance to people finding Jesus. If people don’t know that you live the way you do because of Jesus, they are in danger of concluding it’s possible to live the way you do without Jesus.

When we read the book **Gospel Fluency** as a church a year or two ago, I was deeply moved by one of the author’s stories about sharing Jesus with others:

I wonder how often our good, moral lives, disconnected from any gospel explanation, convince people they don’t need Jesus? We need to do more than just be nice. We need to tell them why we live as we do.

I was speaking recently at a large church in Texas. One part of my message was about being “display people” and the other part was about being “declaration people.” Afterward, a very nice woman complimented me on the message and went on to describe how she and her husband had been trying to love their neighbors. She shared how complex the relationships within their cul-de-sac had become, as most of the neighbors didn’t like or trust one another.

However, she and her husband loved and served everyone regardless. I was encouraged by all the ways they were seeking to love their neighbors.

Then she told me that one of her neighbors had come to her and said: “I don’t understand why you do it. Why are you so kind to that man [a neighbor no one liked]?”

I expected her to excitedly tell me how she had done what I had just taught and had given Jesus as the reason for the hope that she had - the gospel explanation for the life she lived.

Instead, she said: “Well, I just told her: ‘We’re just being kind. It’s not hard to be kind.’”

I stood looking at her for a moment. I think my jaw dropped, making my wonderment a little too conspicuous, and she looked slightly uncomfortable.

“That’s what you told her?” I asked. “Anything else?” I wanted to give her space for a further explanation.

“No, that’s it,” she said. “It’s not hard to be kind” is what I said.”

I couldn’t leave it at that, so I gently encouraged her: “Next time I hope you’ll share how Jesus has changed you. Maybe say something like: ‘Well, God has been so loving to us. When we were the unlovable ones, he sent his Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. We love our neighbors like this because he loved us first.’”

I went on to say: “Your neighborhood will always be a broken place if you neighbors don’t come to know Jesus and the Father’s love for them personally. Kindness alone doesn’t change neighborhoods. Jesus does. It’s great that they experience his kindness and grace in your actions, but until they hear it is because of Jesus and are changed by Jesus themselves, you will be the only ones in the cul-de-sac who have his resources to love others with.”

(Jeff Vanderstelt: Gospel Fluency, 191-193)

As we think about being on mission, and sharing Jesus with others, we need to be ready to speak about who Jesus is to us, and what he has done for us. That is the surest way to make new disciples.

For reflection

When someone tells you that you need to share Jesus (or share the Gospel) with other people, how do you immediately feel inside? Why do you think you feel that way?

What good things do you think might happen if you talked more about Jesus' impact on your life?

Jesus told his disciples to make new disciples in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. How would you categorize each of those areas in your world? Who is one person (or type of person) that lives in each of those "spheres"?

Day 2

When I began attending Daybreak, I realized very quickly that the size of this church would allow me to "slip in and slip out" if I wanted to. I could attend every Sunday and leave after the service with no further involvement than maybe some idle chit chat in the lobby. And the following Sunday, I could do it all again. If I wanted to.

Now, don't get me wrong. The size of Daybreak isn't a "bad" thing. Churches come in all sizes. But it is something to be on guard against – becoming an "attender" - a follower who is not a disciple of Jesus, but a "fan" of Jesus. Because honestly, the "attender/fan" model sometimes seems like a really nice, low commitment option. But is that what would be best for you?

I decided that being an attender wasn't for me, and so I began looking for ways to be involved. Be connected. Be a part of the community. I decided to go on a mission trip to Ecuador, which is what Daybreak calls a "catalytic experience." And it sure was catalytic for me!

Aside from gaining a larger view of the world, I also realized some things about myself on that trip, things that were holding me back, and some ways I had allowed life to drift me off course because I wasn't being proactive in my own discipleship. When we got back from the trip, I began volunteering in Daybreak Kids (being a discipler) and

took the Emotionally Healthy Discipleship course (being discipled).

Since then, I'm still involved in Daybreak Kids, as well as helping to lead Emotionally Healthy Discipleship, and have been on several more mission trips. All because I made the decision to not be an "attender"!

Here's the point: You need to be proactive in your own discipleship and choose to become connected to the larger community of disciples. It doesn't happen by accident. Discipleship always includes others - disciples cannot be disciples without someone else coming alongside them. I certainly would not have grown on my trip to Ecuador if there had not been trip leaders or other trip participants walking alongside me. Community connection is key. You will not grow without it.

For reflection

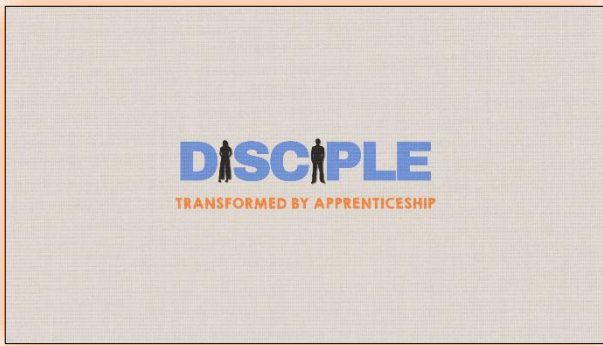
On a scale of 1-5, how would you categorize your "discipleship" to Jesus? 1 = a fan, 5 = a disciple

Who has been instrumental in helping you be a better disciple? Think of big ways and small ways.

In what ways are you discipling others? Think of big ways and small ways, both at Daybreak, and in other places.

What are some ways you can become better connected to a "discipler/discipleship" community?

**Catch the Day 3 & Day 4 readings
online at disciple.db.church!**



Group Talk

For Starters

Where have you traveled for something other than a vacation (for work, church, etc.)? What made it a memorable or compelling journey?

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The Big Idea

Best Practice

Commit yourself to engaging in the mission Jesus has given us.

Passages

Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 14:25-27

Group Goal

Our commission from Jesus is to make disciples of all nations as we engage our heart, mind, soul, and strength to the task. This means prioritizing Jesus above all and being willing to examine and evaluate everything through this lens. We must count the cost of our investment because some things need to be left behind for the sake of the Kingdom.

If we desire to be authentic disciples who abide solely in Christ for their source of strength to bear fruit that glorifies the Father, then we must be actively engaged in serving Him with all of our lives. We want to be fruitful, not busy, as the way to confirm our discipleship.

To Discuss

Our Mission (Matthew 28:18-20)

(18) *"All authority..."* How does knowing Jesus has all authority affect your desire or willingness to participate in the Great Commission?

What does "making a disciple" look like in your own context? How does this differ from simply "making a convert"?

(19) *"...everything I have commanded you."* How can we encourage one another to live in obedience to Jesus' teachings in today's world?

"I will be with you always." How does this promise provide comfort and courage in the face of challenges or opposition?

What is one specific action we as a group can take this week to more actively participate in making disciples, whether locally or globally? How can our small group support one another in fulfilling this mission?

Our Cost (Luke 14:25-27)

(25) *"hate everyone else..."* How would you explain this teaching to someone who might find it troubling? What does it reveal about the level of commitment Jesus expects from his followers?

Jesus often challenged “fans” with difficult requirements to follow Him. What from this passage helps us to distinguish true disciples from casual followers?

In Jesus' time, carrying a cross meant public humiliation and certain death. What might *"carrying your cross"* look like in your life today?

Can you think of a specific situation where following Jesus required personal sacrifice?

On a scale of 1-10, rate your willingness to place Jesus above all other relationships and commitments. What factors influence your rating, and what might move you closer to 10?

We are to count the cost before following Jesus. What has following Jesus cost you personally? What have you gained that would make this cost worthwhile?

Next Steps

Can you name a specific person you want to intentionally love and bless to demonstrate Jesus to them? How about sharing your own story – your journey of faith in Him?

How can you engage with them this week to be present in their world?

Prayer Focus

Pray for each other for a greater burden on your hearts for the broken and lost around you.

Pray for a greater confidence that God will use you.

Pray for opportunities to present themselves over the next month.

Pray for the eyes of our hearts to be open and aware of those moments and needs.

Leadership Tip

Questions are a great way to begin conversations. Open-ended questions, however, work much better than closed-ended questions.

Closed-ended questions call for a single word answer like ‘yes-no’ or ‘true-false.’ Open-ended questions allow the answerer to share a lot more info in a personal way. Questions asking a ‘how’ or ‘why’ can often lead to a good open-ended answer.

Tonight, see if you can ask a question that does not give yes/no or one-word answers, but allows someone to share more of their heart and thoughts.