

Our Strategy for Discipleship

We feel that the Father has given us a strategy to help lead people to obey the commandment of Jesus to make disciples and teach them to obey all that He has commanded.

We have created a framework and tool to help people make disciples who make disciples.

We have been encouraged by a strategy the Wesley brothers started using in the late 1700's and within 50 years impacted over 6 million people who became born-again and discipled. The book, "Banding Together – A Practical Guide for Disciple Makers" by John Wiest is the resource that provides the foundational principles for our strategy.

Here are the 5 principles that our strategy is built upon:

- Principle #1: The Process Is Simple
- Principle #2: The Curriculum Is the Bible
- Principle #3: The Teacher Is the Holy Spirit
- Principle #4: The Focus Is Obedience
- Principle #5: The Result Is Multiplication

Our strategy involves creating groups of 3-5 people, called Discovery or D-Groups, that will meet weekly for 1-1.5 hours. Each group has a facilitator who will help lead and disciple people in the foundational aspects of regularly reading, meditating, and applying God's word to their lives and praying for the people they know who need to relinquish control of their lives to Christ.

What is a D-Group? It's a safe place to embark on a spiritual journey to discover what the Bible teaches us about Jesus and His ways.

The goal is for each person in the D-Group to eventually identify 3-5 people in their sphere of influence who are spiritually curious and start a D-Group with them and then for those 3-5 to do the same, etc.

Some of the optional tools in the Facilitator's Guide are the types of accountability questions that can be discussed each week as well as some practical tips on prayer and a G.R.O.W.T.H. Sheet for people to journal what they are reading and learning.

We have a variety of short and targeted tools that you can start with as you discern the interests and questions of those you are discipling.

There is also a Bible reading schedule that can be used each week that has five days' worth of reading listed – which is one chapter a day. Over the 52 weeks, a person will have read the entire New Testament.

We desire to obey the Great Commandment and the Great Commission of Jesus:

**Love God with reckless abandon
Love others like you want to be loved
Make Disciples**

Matthew 28:18-20 *And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

There is not just one "right" way to fulfill the command of Jesus to make disciples.

There are many ways to walk this mission out. One common denominator for all effective discipleship is that it must be personal and consistent.

The process of discipleship is rooted in relationship. Discipleship is more than assigning a fill-in-the-blank Bible study to an individual or going to church services. It is the impartation of life, the transference of principles, and leading by example.

Obedience to the truth of the Bible must be at the center of discipleship.

Discipleship is the building of a biblical foundation in an individual's life so that they are changed by the Holy Spirit from the inside out.

The goal of discipleship is to nurture growth in one's relationship with God, resulting in Christ-like character, which is based on a solid Biblical foundation, the work of the Holy Spirit and the personal, practical, obedient application of biblical truth.

While there are many useful tools available that can be used for discipleship, it's important to remember that the goal of discipleship is not to get through as many studies as possible. True discipleship is not the accumulation of biblical information but the development of biblical character.

We must have an idea of the outcomes we want to see in the lives of those we disciple, or we may find ourselves drifting aimlessly in our desire to help others.

One of the easiest ways to envision what this looks like is to ask the question, “What does a Jesus Follower look like?”

Not an outward description of their appearance or public behavior but a snapshot of their character, motives, attitudes, core beliefs, and their Christ-like/Spirit-led behavior. In a nutshell:

“Why do I do the things that I do and who do I do them for?”

The honest answer to that question reveals the core values/beliefs that motivate you. It exposes your actual worldview. If we are disciples/followers of Jesus, obedience to His word/principles/truth motivates us as we live to serve Him.

Here’s a simple explanation of what we mean when we talk about being a Church of Disciples and Disciple Makers:

“Discipleship” is learning to follow Jesus.

“Disciple making” is accompanying someone as they learn to follow Jesus.

“Church” is following Jesus together.

Discipleship oriented churches aren’t simply teaching the Bible well or facilitating small groups. Within such churches, people are maturing not only as followers of Jesus, but as those who can guide others as they learn to follow Jesus. A disciple making Church grows and multiplies by making disciples. It develops and multiplies leaders by making disciples.

This is different from starting with a program and trying to convince people to attend it. It’s different from the “sage on a stage” paradigm.

There’s still a need for organization and structure and there is still a role for those with gifts and callings as Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds, and Teachers. The key is that the organization of the church doesn’t revolve around them or the meetings they lead. They simply make up part of the “team” that serves the Body of Christ.

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