

Building A Culture Of Discipleship

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[0 : 00] I'm going to talk to you guys this morning about building a culture of discipleship. Building a culture of discipleship. We were talking a little bit this weekend about how, because it's a new church and it's in the early stages, that we should be thinking about what's the culture we want to build as a church.

You know, this isn't like this long established culture. We're 10 months into this. And what is the culture we want to build? Well, one of those things I think that we should be intentional to build into our church culture is a culture of discipleship.

Okay. So I want to talk about that this morning and hopefully bring a sense of clarity from the scriptures. And we'll jump in.

Well, before we jump in to the actual main text is Matthew 28, which many of you are familiar with, Matthew 28, 18 to 20. But before I say that, I think one thing that's happened in the context of discipleship is two things have been lowered, which created this kind of weird vacuum for discipleship to be interpreted in a wrong way.

Okay. So the first one is, is that we've lowered the bar on what it means to be a Christian because so many people have been Christians in name only or have professed Christ.

[1 : 22] But it's like, okay, this isn't adding up. I don't think this person is really a Christian. And it's almost like we had people felt the need to create this new, this other term to define the people who actually are Christians, you know, the real Christians.

And so we talked about, because people say things even, heard people say weird things like, well, he's a Christian, but he's just not walking with the Lord. It's like, well, that's kind of the same thing. You know, what do you mean? He's not walking with the Lord and he's a Christian. Things like that. And so we almost created, it's like, well, since Christian has been dumbed down, since Christian has been relegated to things that aren't really Christian, maybe disciple is something that's like, that's a real Christian.

Yeah, you're a Christian, but are you a disciple? You know, it's almost like we've elevated this word disciple to mean something way more than a Christian. And I think it's really because we've lowered the bar on what it means to be a Christian and we shouldn't do that.

In the same way, I think what also has happened is we've lowered the bar on what it means to be the church, because there's a lot of churches in name that don't really make disciples.

[2 : 35] Churches in name that don't do a lot of discipleship or teaching people how to obey Jesus, or it's only, or they do, but it's only from a pulpit. Like it's not life on life.

It's not in each other's lives the way Jesus did it. But then what ends up happening is we think, oh, okay, well, because church has been so dumbed down, well, then I have to think of, well, I have to create other things to make disciples.

You know, there's, yeah, you're a part of church, but are you making disciples? And it's like, well, is there a kind of church that doesn't make disciples? We've dumbed it down so much to think that churches don't make disciples.

And then we've even gone farther and people start whole parachurch organizations just so that they can make disciples. You hear what I'm saying here where it's just like, well, you know, I started this parachurch thing to, so I can make disciples.

And I'm thinking, really? Didn't Jesus start something that has part of that word in it, church, that was supposed to make disciples? Why do you need another entity? Why do you need another thing to make disciples?

[3 : 39] That's what the church is supposed to do. Well, yeah, but the churches are doing that. So start a new one, like start a new entity. Why not just make the one that God created, that God is

building, and just do it right?

But what ended up happening is people, many of this kind of proliferation of parachurches all over the place, basically doing the things that they couldn't do in a church because a lot of churches were just relegated to, the only guy who could do that was the guy standing behind the pulpit who was the paid professional.

And so there was no room to do discipleship. And so we had to start these, people start these parachurch organizations just so they have an avenue for it. And that's unfortunate, but it's also just not right.

It's not what God initially intended. So I think you have this dumbing down of the word Christian and dumbing down of the word church. And so then you have like this elevated, like disciple becomes something I don't think it was supposed to mean.

And then disciple making becomes this thing that's like separate from the church. And that's weird. It was never supposed to be that way. In this conversation of disciple making and building a discipleship culture, I think it's really important to ask a basic but necessary question.

[4 : 51] What does the Bible say? What does the Bible say? There are a lot of opinions on discipleship that a lot of times I'll hear things when people talk about making disciples. I'm like, where are you getting that from?

I mean, I know where people do that or I know what stream of the church is into that. But my question is, where in the Bible does it say that? Like that's a strong take or a strong opinion. But is it grounded in the scriptures? And that's what we need to ask ourselves. Is what we're talking about when we talk about discipleship, is it grounded in the scriptures? Not is it, well, that's what I've, I've been a Christian for a long time.

That's what we've always done. Or at my church that I was a part of before, that's the way we did it. Or at this church, that's the way they did it. And so that must be the way it's done or that must be the best way it's done.

Or that must be how it's defined. And my question is, what do the scriptures say? Is it grounded in scripture? Is it biblical? And if we have a strong opinion about discipleship, but don't have any ties to the scripture with it, you should question that belief.

[5 : 57] You should question that conviction and make sure it's aligned to the scriptures. So now let's jump into Matthew chapter 28, starting verse 18 through 20.

What many call the Great Commission. It says, Okay. So let's, let's, let's break this down.

Let's look at this in more depth. First question when I look at this scripture is who is he speaking to? Okay. Who's he talking to? That makes a difference. Well, he's talking to his disciples.

So speaking to his disciples, he says, uh, to make disciples. That gives us a clue about what a disciple is. Disciples make disciples.

There's no such thing as a disciple doesn't make a disciple because the disciple is supposed to obey what Jesus commanded and Jesus commanded to make disciples. So it's kind of an oxymoron to say, well, yeah, I'm a disciple doesn't make disciples.

[7 : 18] No, that's not a disciple. He, he, he makes it clear here, go make disciples. And he's speaking to disciples. So a disciple maker, a disciple is someone who makes disciples.

Disciples make disciples. Okay. Verse 19 starts off with the word go. Okay. He says, go. This implies that with disciple making there's, there's action that's required.

There's action that's a part of it. Uh, we can't, you can't stay where you're at. You need to go. You need to, uh, pursue people, pursue people to, uh, be made into disciples.

So, uh, sometimes we think, you know, well, I kind of like where I'm comfortable. I just want to do my own thing and people can come to me. That's fine. But no, this says go.

It doesn't say wait for someone to come to you. It says, go, go, go make disciples. Okay. So go. Secondly, it says make, which then also brings us to the concept that disciples are made.

[8 : 21] Okay. Disciples are made. Now, if you know, something's made, you know, like you see something like, oh, that's an interesting thing. I would like to have that. Somebody made that.

How do you make that is the question, right? If you have, you know, something you eat, it's like, wow, that was great. How did you make that, right? When you see something that you like or enjoy, you usually ask the question, how is that made?

Well, we know that disciples are made. So the question then that we should have is how are disciples made? It begs the question. And that's a question we shouldn't just answer on our own

apart from the scriptures.

We just get to say, well, this is how I'd like to do it or this is how I'd like to do it. And where there's freedom, let there be freedom. But where the Bible says you should do it this way or where the Bible gives us a path of doing it, we should follow that.

Okay. So we'll get into that more. But I just wanted to make that point that disciples are made. And so we should at least ask the question, how are they made? Okay. So go make what?

[9 : 20] You make disciples. What are you making? You're making disciples, which then begs another question. What is a disciple? Okay. So if you think a disciple is one thing and I think a disciple is another thing and we both say, hey, we're making disciples.

No, no, no, no. You're making something different than I am, but I'm making a disciple. Not if you don't have the same definition of what a disciple is. It's pretty important, right?

You can't say, well, I'm making disciples. You're making disciples. Great. We're all making disciples. Not if that word doesn't mean the same thing to us. And again, what's the unifying factor? How do we get the word to make, to mean the same thing for both of us?

The scriptures. Okay. So we got to look to the scriptures, which we'll look to that question as well. But I'm just trying to go through this and try to, sometimes the best thing to do is make sure you're asking the right questions too, right?

So you go, you make, what are you making? You're making disciples. How do you make them?

We'll look at that. Okay. Of what? Of all nations. So that answers the question of where, right?

[10 : 24] So do we only do it here? Well, you start here and you always are open to the fact that God could send you elsewhere, right? Some people are to go.

Clearly not all, because if everybody went, then no one would stay. And if nobody stayed, well, who's going to make disciples where you were at? Then it would just be this mass shuffle.

Everybody's just moving to where they don't live, right? I don't think that's what Jesus was saying here, that you can't live where you're from and everybody has to go live somewhere else.

But I do believe that what he's saying here is you do, some people do have to go to different places.

There's people who haven't heard, right? There's people where there's no gospel witness. There's countries where there's no gospel witness.

Cities where there's no gospel witness. And although not everyone is called to do that, we should always be willing to do that and open to doing that and be in a place where we can, where God could tell us that and we could hear him.

That we're not so entrenched and comfortable in our own life, but we could say, okay, God, I'm here. I'm available. Like, I'm going to be where I'm at right now. I'm going to do what I need to do here. I'm going to make disciples here.

[11 : 28] But if you would want to call me somewhere else, may I be receptive to that. That's just a good prayer to pray. It's a good thing to be thinking about because God does call people to go to other nations, right?

And he wants to disciple all nations. He wants people everywhere to become disciples. And until the gospel is, the end won't come until the gospel is preached to all people groups, right?

Right? So in asking the question of how, part of that is answered here in this verse as well. So we go, we make, make what? Make disciples.

Where? All nations. How? There's two ways that he's saying that. First, he says, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Clearly, he's not telling us to baptize people who aren't Christians.

That, the fact that he's saying, go baptize people, we can, we can allude from that, that he wants us to preach the gospel to people and see people get saved. Right?

[12 : 26] The first how of discipleship is they have to become a Christian. Like, we're not going to disciple someone who's not. So when he's saying, go disciple people, he's saying, baptize them.

Preach the gospel to them, get them saved, and then baptize them. And then the second thing is, he says, and teach them to observe, or another word that could be used there is obey, everything Jesus commanded.

Okay? So it's baptizing and teaching people to obey. Baptizing and teaching. Preaching the gospel and teaching. Okay?

Very important in answering the question of how. All right. Let's look at a more detailed, detailed into some of these questions.

How about the question of, what is a disciple? Okay? What is a disciple? Well, a clue of this is, I think, Acts chapter 11, verse 26. Before Acts chapter 11, there's no mention of a Christian.

[13:26] There's only mention of disciples. Right? And then in Acts chapter 11, 26, it says, and in Antioch, the disciples were first called Christians. So you got to ask the question, is a disciple a Christian?

Are they synonymous? Or is a disciple more than a Christian? I don't think a disciple is. I believe that when he says, go make disciples, he's saying, go make Christians. Okay?

They're used synonymous in the scriptures here. And that's why we have to, what he's saying, baptize them is because they need to become a Christian. But I think the first thing that's important to say is a disciple is a Christian.

A Christian is the disciple. We've, again, when you dumb down the word Christian and then disciple becomes this better thing. And, well, if Christian just was what it was always meant to be and what it was in the book of Acts, they mean the same thing.

A Christian is a disciple. An disciple is a Christian. I think that's a really important thing to think about because sometimes we're trying to make it into something that it's not. And I don't think the Bible is doing that.

[14:30] Another way to look at when you ask the question, what is a disciple is? What did Jesus say a disciple was? The one who's saying, go make a disciple is, what are the marks, the distinguishing marks that he gave?

Because Jesus would say things very cut and dry, black and white things like, if you don't do this, then you can't be my disciple. Well, if I'm asking the question, what is a disciple?

Those kind of things are, those are piquing my interest. My ears are, okay, that's important. So as far as I can see, I can see seven different things that kind of seven different marks of a disciple that Jesus brings up.

All right, let's look at them. And I think if you look at these seven things, these also are great things to think about when you have a new disciple or a new Christian, what are some things that we like groundwork that we need to lay with them?

What are things that they need to understand, be taught and make sure that that's there? Again, number one, to just make sure that they're a disciple, period. But two, in making sure that they're a disciple, you're also building confidence in them to disciple and then they can go teach other people and make disciples as well.

[15:39] If you don't know what a disciple is, how will you make one? If you don't know what a disciple is and you're not teaching other people what a disciple is, how will they make one? So let's look at these seven things. The first four of them are in Luke chapter 14, okay?

Luke chapter 14, verse 26, he says, if you don't hate your family and even your own life, you cannot be my disciple, okay?

So this speaks of priority, right? We clearly know from the rest of the scripture, he's not saying you have to literally hate your family because he tells you another place to love. But in view of the difference between how you love God and how you love your family, it should, there should be such a drastic difference there that it would look like hate.

And he says, even hate your own life. Where you're not loving your own life and counting your own life as better than other people. Like Chris just talked about this in Philippians chapter 2, considering other people better than yourself, right?

So this is a mark of discipleship. He says, you cannot be my disciple unless you hate your family and even your own life. And so we should teach, we should use this as a distinguisher of a disciple, but also teach them that there's an order of priority that you, Jesus is first, your family has to be less than, and you're last.

[16:58] You know, you don't count your life as valuable, but you lay down your life, all right? Secondly, he says you have to carry your cross. And if you don't carry your cross, you cannot be my disciple, all right?

So there's a cost to discipleship or there's a cost to Christianity, all right? And we need to teach people that. There's been a crossless Christianity that's been preached many times in church context.

That's a false gospel. It's a false Christianity. Because Jesus says you can't be a disciple unless you carry your cross. So if you preach a gospel or a Christianity that doesn't cost you or you don't

have to carry your cross, you're selling them a bill of goods.

That's not the real deal. They can't actually be a disciple if they have a crossless Christianity, okay? Number three, he says you have to follow Jesus.

You pick up your cross and follow Jesus or you can't be my disciple. So you can't just be a good person. You can't just ascend to higher morals. You can't just attend church.

[18:03] You have to actually follow Jesus. You have to actually listen to him, obey him, reverence him as God, believe that he is who he says he is and not just a prophet, but that he's actually God.

And you have to follow him. You have to follow his leading and obey his scriptures. And then at the end of Luke 14 and verse 33, he then makes an even more sweeping statement.

He says, unless you give up everything, or another version would say, unless you forsake all, you cannot be my disciple. So there has to be this, now we're talking an even more pervasive set of priorities where it's just like, hey, you can't hold anything in higher value than Jesus.

You have to forsake everything in order to follow Jesus. You have to lose your life. Anyone who tries to save their life will lose it. Whoever loses his life for my sake in the gospel will find it. Mark 8, 35.

Okay. And so there's this giving up of everything. Or you cannot be my disciple. And so you have people, it's like they've given up certain things. Just talking to someone about a month or two ago, and he was just so distraught because he felt like, I've given up this, I've given up this, I've given up this.

[19:16] I've given up so much. And yet there was one thing he was unwilling to give up. And he was constantly in this up and down. He was bound up by things. And like, I don't believe you're a Christian.

Even though you attend church and you talk the talk and you know verses and you've been around for a long time, I don't think you've actually forsaken all. There's still this thing that you're unwilling to give up.

There's still an area where you are still walking in rebellion, where you give God the stiff arm and say, no, like I'll do this. I'll do this. I'll do this. But I won't do that. And he said, you cannot be his disciple if you're not willing to give up everything.

You're still holding on to this. And unfortunately, from that conversation, he went away sad. But that's the same thing that happened when Jesus spoke this way. Like when he said to the rich young ruler, he's like, well, I've done, what do I got to do?

I've done that. I've done this. I've done this. I've done that. I've done all those things, Lord. He's like, well, one thing you lack. Go sell everything you have. Well, he was rich. And so like, well, I'm not going to do that.

[20:20] And why did he not tell everyone to sell all their stuff? I think he was discerning that this person loved his money and his stuff. And that was his God. And until he was going to forsake that, he couldn't be his disciple.

And what did he do? He went away sad. The fact that more people don't go away sad when we preach the gospel and talk about what it means to be a disciple or a Christian. When Jesus talked about it, people did go away sad.

You got to ask the question, are we preaching the same thing Jesus did? Is our version of Christianity or discipleship the same as Jesus if nobody goes away sad? People should go away sad sometimes.

No, we hope that they don't. We hope that they would forsake those things and turn to Christ. They would repent. Okay. But that's required. Or you cannot be my disciple. Jesus is saying it unequivocally.

You cannot. Fifth one, John 13, 35. Okay. He talks about all people will know that you are my disciples.

[21:19] How? By your love for one another. Okay. So if you end up saying, well, yeah, I'm a Christian, but I don't value church. I don't value the one another. I don't value people.

It's like, well, I don't know about this. I don't know if you're really a disciple. You prove. Okay. They'll know. They'll know that you're a disciple by your love for one another.

This is where we teach people the importance of a new disciple. We say, hey, you need the church. You need the church. A disciple. We know you're a disciple because you love one another. And that's what we need to teach people.

And if that's not there, you got to ask the question. I don't know if this person's a disciple. Jesus gives us these clues. Number six. John 15, verse eight. He says, bear much fruit.

And by bearing much fruit, you prove to be my disciples. So the question would be, you're a disciple? What's the proof? Well, Jesus gives us the proof that you're bearing much fruit.

[22 : 16] And again, this is what we're teaching a new believer. How do you teach a believer that they bear much fruit? You abide in Christ. And if you abide in Christ, you'll bear much fruit. You don't bear fruit on yourself.

You don't bear fruit by trying harder. There's only one person who could truly be a Christian. That's Jesus. And so a Christian puts their faith in Jesus. Jesus lives inside of them.

And Jesus lives the Christian life through you. Right? And you begin to bear much fruit. It's the fruit of the Spirit inside of you. Okay? This is how you prove to be a disciple.

If you look at someone, they don't have the fruit. You know, I was talking to someone the other day. They've been looking at porn for 15 years almost every single day, many times, multiple times a day, for 15 years straight.

I said, hey, listen. I don't care that you profess to be a Christian for all this time. Where's the fruit, man? Where's the fruit? You're not proving to be a disciple because the fruit that's coming to your life is not the life of a disciple.

[23 : 15] It's a different kind of fruit. It's bad fruit. This tells me this is a bad tree. You want to prove that you're a disciple? There has to be fruit. Number seven. John 8, 31.

Jesus says, if you hold to my teaching, you are truly my disciples. Again, using the language of truly tells you that there's false disciples.

If Jesus was telling us how to distinguish what a true disciple was, you've got to infer that there must be people who are false disciples, who profess to be disciples but aren't truly. And he said the distinguishing marker is that they hold to Jesus' teaching.

And so this is why any new disciple, they have to believe the Bible and obey the Bible. Read the Bible and obey the Bible. Hear and obey. Right? And when you see a person who reads the Bible, hears the Bible, he holds to the teachings of Jesus.

Okay, now we're talking here. Now I can see you're truly his disciple. If someone's not holding to Jesus' teaching, you've got to ask, is this person truly a disciple? Jesus says, no, you're not truly my disciple if you don't hold to my teachings.

[24 : 25] So you have these seven marks. Hating your family and your life. Carrying your cross. Following Jesus. Giving up everything. Love for one another. Bearing much fruit. And holding to Jesus' teaching.

Okay, I think those are really good things to answer the question, what is a disciple? All right? And the next question would be, disciples of who? Like, are we supposed to make disciples of ourselves?

Or are we supposed to make disciples of Jesus? I think one of the reasons where this can get distorted is that people are trying to make disciples of themselves instead of making disciples of Jesus. Now, if you look in the Bible, you have Mark 2, verse 18.

You have John had disciples. And the Pharisees had disciples. Okay? The Pharisees even said in John 9, that guy who got healed, he's like, why are you asking all these questions?

Do you too want to become Jesus' disciple? And they're like, no. We're disciples of Moses. You know? And just kind of dropped the hammer and then made a bunch of, said a bunch of mean things about him or whatever.

[25 : 28] But here you see, the only, you see there was disciples of John. There was disciples of the Pharisees. The Pharisees claimed to be disciples of Moses. But in Acts 9, verse 1, it says, But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord.

Okay? The disciples were disciples of the Lord. The disciples are disciples of Christ. Paul confronted this in 1 Corinthians 1. Okay? There's a little bit of, a little quarreling among the brothers, so to speak.

And in verse 12, it says, One of you says, I follow Paul. One says, I follow Apollos. Or I follow Cephas. Or, the really spiritual ones, I follow Christ.

I'm not a man follower. I don't follow Paul and Cephas and Apollos. I follow Christ. Yeah. We're the Christ followers. And he says, Is Christ divided?

Was Paul crucified for you? Okay? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? So his whole point is, it's not about becoming disciples of Paul.

[26 : 35] You don't get baptized in the name of Paul. Paul wasn't crucified for you. Jesus was crucified for you. You're disciplined in his, I mean, you're baptized in his name.

Okay? But these guys were wanting to separate and saying, Well, I'm a disciple of this person. I'm a disciple of this person. Where they should have been uniting in that we're all disciples of the Lord. We're disciples of the Lord.

And that's where I think things can get a little off. You see that also in chapter 3 of 1 Corinthians. He brings this up again. He says, When one says, I follow Paul, and another, I follow Apollos, are you not merely being human?

And he says, What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. Okay?

So neither he who plants, nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. Okay? So I think he's making this point here that don't be associating with these particular people.

[27 : 34] You don't make disciples of yourselves. You're to make disciples of Christ. And I think the danger in making disciples of ourselves is we end up drawing people to ourselves. Acts chapter 20, Paul warned of this.

When he was talking to the Ephesian elders, his last kind of address to the Ephesian elders, this quintessential, like, exhortation to elders. It's awesome. Acts chapter 20.

Towards the end of it, in verse 29, he says that, I know that after my departure, fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. And from among you, your own selves, from among your own selves, will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.

Okay? To draw away the disciples after them. And that's the danger in thinking that, oh, I'm supposed to make my disciples. No, you make Christ disciples.

And when you make disciples of you, they end up being drawn after you. And they can end up looking a little bit more like you than like Jesus. Even though you look like Jesus, you want to always be pointing them to Jesus.

[28 : 41] Yes, different people are going to have influence over people, but they should be influencing them to Jesus. Okay? Making disciples of Jesus. Disciples of the Lord, as it says in Acts chapter 9, verse 1.

In Matthew chapter 23, Jesus was rebuking the Pharisees. So again, they had these disciples that were their disciples. And Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, the scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so do and observe what they tell you.

Okay? That word observe there, that's the exact same Greek word that you saw in Matthew chapter 28, when it says, teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you.

So same concept, same thing there. He's saying, hey, observe what they're telling you to do. Obey what they're telling you to do, because they're telling you to do what the Bible says, but not the works they do.

Not the works they do. For they preach, but they do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.

[29 : 46] They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad, and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts, and the best seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the marketplaces, and being called rabbi by others.

Okay? This is, I think sometimes what can even happen in discipleship, where people are drawing people to themselves, is they want people to know how many disciples they have, and how well I'm doing that, and it's like, how many disciples do you have?

Who are you discipling? And it just ends up, well, I'm doing this. Do you see how I'm doing this? It becomes this stature, becomes this kind of drawing attention to oneself, kind of like the fact that people maybe call them pastor, or call them, you know, whatever they might call them, you know, and he says, these people like being called rabbi by others.

And then he says, but you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers, and call no man your father on earth, for you have one father, who is in heaven.

And then in verse 10 he says, neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. The greatest among you shall be your servant. Okay? Whoever exalts himself will be humbled,

whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

[30 : 59] You might say, well does this mean we can't call anyone teacher, or father, or Christ? I mean, aren't there other parts of scripture? Again, let's interpret scripture with scripture. Didn't Paul say in 1 Corinthians 4, 15, that you have many instructors in Christ?

Some translations say you have 10,000 instructors in Christ. I thought he just said, you only have one instructor, Christ. And then he said, you have, but he goes, but you don't have many fathers. And then Paul said, I became your father. I thought he says here, you don't call anyone father because you have one father. Well, why is Paul saying that then? So let's take it in context and interpret scripture with scripture.

Okay? I don't think he's, he's clearly not saying you can't ever do this, but in the context that he's talking here, he's saying, don't do this in the sense where you're, you're gravitating more towards people as a, as a father rather than God, the father, because any person who's a father to you is supposed to reflect the father, not draw attention to himself as being a father.

Anyone who's a teacher, you know, don't be so enamored with the fact that he's a teacher, um, or an instructor, uh, that, that he's a teacher and you're really just hung up on his teaching.

[32 : 09] Like realize that it's ultimately God who is our teacher. You really only have one teacher. And these people are all just teaching you the things that God has already taught. They're not coming up with anything new. And although they might be a father to you, and you can even say this person's like a father to me, you're not ultimately obsessed with them.

You're obsessed with the one they're pointing to. You're obsessed with the one, uh, the, the, the God who's behind all this. Right. And so I think that's an important thing to grasp when it comes to discipleship, but it begs the question then, and here's really a very important question.

How are disciples made? And this is where a lot of times people disagree or there's different arguments or, you know, conversations. And, um, again, we got to go back to the scripture.

So first and foremost, let's look at the 10,000 foot view and then we'll go to more of a detailed view. So the 10,000 foot view in Matthew 28, we see two ways that you make disciples, baptizing them and teaching them to obey.

Okay. So baptism and teaching, you get them saved and you teach them to obey. I've, I've heard a lot of way more complicated explanations of discipleship and I just don't know where they're getting it from.

[33 : 20] Okay. I think it should be that simple. You make disciples by preaching the gospel to them. They believe, and then you teach them to obey what Jesus commanded. That's how you make disciples.

They become a Christian. Then you teach them how to be a Christian. Okay. So they become a disciple and you teach them how to be a disciple. All right. That's the 10,000 foot view. Acts 14, 21 to 22.

Paul's doing this. He says, when they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations, we must enter the kingdom of God.

So they first made the disciples by preaching the gospel to them. And then they continue to make them into disciples by strengthening them and encouraging them in the things of discipleship and the things that are commanded by God in the scriptures.

Okay. That's a 10,000 foot view. And I really think we should think of it that simply. And I think that sometimes overcomplicating it gets us in the weeds. That, that should be kind of the 10,000 foot simplistic view.

[34 : 29] Now, if we get more into the detail, and I'm not saying don't get in the weeds, meaning don't talk about details. We need to talk about details. But if you talk about the details and forget the 10,000 foot view, that's when I think we get off, like start from there and drill down.

Don't start from, down here and drill up because then you might end up at a different destination. Okay. So start with the great commission in Matthew 28, and then drill down into it and drill down into the rest of the scriptures.

So if we drill down into the rest, in the more of a detailed view, there's a few things that emerge throughout the scriptures that I want to point out. Okay. First one substance.

It's the man and the message, not just the message, but the man as well. Okay. In other words, it takes one to make one. If you're going to be a disciple maker, you need to first be a disciple. Okay. And sometimes the problem with making disciples is the guy's not even a Christian who's trying to make disciples, or he's not a very good one. You know, he's not, he's, he's, he's, he's really weak, really struggling.

[35 : 28] And so it's like, that doesn't mean a weak Christian can't make a disciple, but we want to be effective disciple makers. Those seven aspects of discipleship should be present. They should be obvious.

We should be able to see those things. Okay. It takes one to make one. Do you have the seven marks of discipleship that Jesus gave? If we don't, well, let's start there, right?

Let's start there first. So let's start with the man, but let's also have the right message. And really when it comes to disciples, you're teaching them to obey all that Jesus commanded. So I think you have to do Colossians 3, 16, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

If you're going to be a good disciple maker, you got to be able to teach what the Bible says. Like read the Bible, teach the Bible, know the Bible, share the Bible, like get it into you and then give it out. And you know, you, you get the Bible into you and then you notice, oh, they're not doing what the Bible said.

I'm going to teach them. Right. That sounds overly simplistic, but that's really what discipleship is. Like I'm reading things in the scripture that I'm not, seeing in this other person, I'm going to teach them how to obey.

[36 : 34] Okay. Another aspect of the drill down view of discipleship, the concept of family. Okay. And it's natural and spiritual family.

Okay. So the natural first, well, you start with your own household. Okay. The Bible talks about, you know, how can you take care of the church? You can't take care of your own household.

So start from there. You learn, you learn by that. And that, that, that, that's like a grounds for, um, that's a grounds for, uh, the spiritual family is first the natural family.

And so start there, make disciples of your own kids. If you have them, if you don't have kids, well, then go make disciples of other people. Right. But we, we start in that. If you got, people are just like, well, I'm just all about making disciples, but I haven't, I don't really care about making disciples of my own kids.

It's like, hello, there's something wrong here. I don't know if you quite understand discipleship.

Yeah, but I got this parachurch ministry. I'm a missionary and I've been doing this for many years and all your kids hate God and they don't want to have anything to do with God.

[37 : 43] There's a disconnect here. Like something's not right here. I don't think you understand how to make disciples here. Okay. So start in your household first, but there is an aspect of spiritual parenting.

Parenting in discipleship. Like I would say mature discipleship, mature, mature disciple making looks like parenting. Okay. Fathers, mothers, sons, daughters.

That's why you have the language, even in the scriptures where Paul says to Timothy, my son, right? Onesimus, my son, Titus, my son, Mark, uh, or, uh, Paul refers to Mark.

I'm sorry. Peter refers to Mark as his true son in the faith. You have this familial language. Paul says, first Corinthians four, 15. You have many instructors, but I became your father.

Okay. Treat older men as fathers, younger or older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, younger men as brothers. First Timothy five. Okay. So you have this familial language, but I would say everyone can make disciples, but not everyone can be a spiritual parent.

[38 : 48] Okay. That's an important distinction to make. Right. Cause, uh, you know, you got two people kind of around the same age or something. It's like, Hey man, I'm going to be your spiritual father.

It's like, bro, I don't know about that. Uh, this, this really kind of weird. Like we're kind of in the same spot here. Now there could be a sense where someone could in some ways, almost father someone their same age or even older than them.

If they, if they have, uh, if they're sourcing them in such a way, the word father means source. In fact, there's a verse in Corinthians where it's even that same word is translated. The source of all compassion or the father of all compassion.

We're talking about God, but let's be realistic. Not everyone can be a spiritual parent to one another. And sometimes you can get really weird in a relationship when someone's trying to be your spiritual father and mother.

And it's like, Hey, can you know, we haven't really developed like a brother brother relationship yet, or a sister sister relationship. Why all of a sudden you jump into your, my spiritual father.

[39 : 50] That's, that's weird. And it may actually never happen. Like we may just be brothers or sisters because we're in the same place or the same age. Like that's weird.

And so if you only think of discipleship in a familial context, well, then you start to get, um, it starts to look different than I think the Bible wants it to look.

Now, if you put it, have a category for that being mature discipleship and the fact that yes, ideally we have fathers and mothers in the faith who can, by imitation and example, be followed in a way that maybe it's not going to be the same at a brother sister level.

That, that, that, that's a huge thing. That's important. shepherds, uh, shepherds, elders are to be examples to the flock. Paul, when he was speaking, um, to younger men, he was saying to them, Hey, imitate me, follow me as I follow Christ, imitate my way of life.

Right? So there's a place for that. But when you say that that's the, that is the only kind of, that is discipleship. That's the only context for discipleship. That is the definition of discipleship.

[41 : 00] We're really missing out. And you've just cut off a lot of people from being able to make disciples and you're doing people a disservice. It's just not biblical. Separate that into mature discipleship.

And there is a need for fathers and mothers. But if you're not a father or mother, that doesn't mean you can't disciple. Doesn't mean you can't make disciples. You can still teach people to obey Jesus. You can still preach the gospel and people get saved. Any, any disciple can make disciples. Not any disciple can truly be a real legit father or mother to someone.

Do you see, do you see the difference there? I think that's a really important distinction. And I think what ends up happening is questions like, who are you discipling?

Or who has disciplined you? It ends up making these kind of categories of discipleship that feel really unattainable for, for someone else, because they're kind of more talking about like who fathered you or who mothered you.

[41 : 58] Or they're asked, I think a better question would be, Hey, have you had like a father or mother in your life? Or who, who has helped make you a disciple? Who has helped teach you about Jesus?

Okay. Like I would, like if I personally talk to myself, I would say I had three spiritual fathers in my life, but I've been disciplined by many. I've had many people teach me to obey Jesus.

People older, younger. Okay. Now all my spiritual fathers were older than me, but the people who have helped make me disciples, many of them are younger than me. I mean, many times in this church or at Bellicose, like young, younger people have challenged me and taught me how to obey Jesus.

I've learned from people in my life. And that's the, the most effective is to be life on life. And Jesus modeled that. But anything that's teaching you to obey Jesus, if I read a book by someone, they're helping make me disciple.

Now I'm not going to say, you know, so, you know, so-and-so is discipling me. It's like, well, no, not in the sense of, if you're thinking of it in the sense of like fathering or mothering, that's ridiculous.

[43 : 06] But if you're thinking about it in the sense like, is this book, this person indirectly helping me obey Jesus? Yes, absolutely. Did that sermon help me obey Jesus? Yes, but I don't know them, but it still helps.

And that's a form of discipleship. Now, if people are only getting their discipleship from podcasts and books, and there's no context of church, well, that goes back to, you know, that you're disciples, you can, you can see that you're a disciple by your love for one another.

Like there has to be life on life. There has to be that. And Jesus spent a lot of time with, with 12 and particularly with three. Okay. Which, uh, gets you into another, uh, kind of detailed view.

You do it with others. Discipleship happens with others. Okay. Small groups and group groups. You always have people that kind of argue this in the church. No, no, no. Discipleship's only in the small, small settings.

Okay. Cause I mean, come on, man. Jesus had 12 disciples. Like, and then, and then you have others just like, no, discipleship is from the pulpit, man. It's about preaching. And those are the churches you go to where the pulpit is almost bigger than the stage.

[44 : 12] It's like massive. Right. And that's clearly telling you something. Hey, this is where discipleship happens. Unless you get behind here, you ain't doing any disciple making. That's, that's me. And that's my job.

Okay. Well, number one, did Jesus make, did he make disciples in small groups or big? What's the answer? The answer is both. The answer is both.

Well, how do I know that? Well, let me ask you the question. When Jesus ascended into heaven, how many disciples did he have? Did he have 12? Or did he have 120?

Or maybe even over 500? Cause he appeared to 500, but we know for sure he had at least 120. Cause 120, what did he call them? Disciples were meeting together.

Well, Jesus didn't spend quality, small group time with 120. How did he end up with 120 when he only spent time with 12? Well, he did spend time with the others, just not the same kind of time, which tells you, you make disciples in that smaller context.

[45 : 16] And clearly that was a priority of Jesus's, which is worth noting, but you also make disciples in the bigger context. When he was preaching to the multitudes, there's actually phrases in the Bible say, multitude of disciples.

It says crowds of disciples. So it was more than the 12. Okay. And so right now I'm speaking to, I don't know, 20, 30 people here.

Most something like that. I'm, that's a larger group. If I speak to hundreds of people somewhere else, I'm still making disciples by preaching and teaching.

Why? Cause I'm teaching and obey what Jesus commanded. Now, if I only did that while I'm missing out, Jesus clearly prioritized the 12. So it's gotta be both. Some people even go more granular and say, well, just, it's only one-on-one.

Like, unless you're discipling one person and one person is discipling you, you're not doing discipleship. And some people have mistakenly heard me talk about this and think, I don't believe in one-on-one discipleship.

[46 : 20] That's not true. I meet with people one-on-one all the time, every single week. There's not a week that goes by where I don't meet with someone one-on-one. I clearly believe in that. And the reason I believe in that is because there's effective way to teach people how to believe something when you're mean with one-on-one.

What I don't believe in is one-on-one exclusivity, where everybody has to have one person they're discipling, and everyone has to have one person discipling them.

There's nothing in the Bible that says that. So what I'm against is this thing that we must do one-on-one exclusivity when it comes to discipleship, because some people teach that. And I'm saying, no.

Again, that's dumbing down the church and thinking that we can't make disciples of each other. Some of the best contexts of disciple-making that have happened in my life is when I've been in a small group of people, and multiple people are helping teach what Jesus commanded.

I've been so blessed and challenged in those settings multiple times. But I've also been really blessed and challenged when one person was pouring into my life in a huge way.

[47 : 25] But I've also never had a time in my life where it was only one person who's pouring into my life, and I didn't receive from the church and help be made into a better disciple through the church, even while one person had more time in my life as a father.

And I don't understand sometimes why people argue about this. It's like, why don't we just do both? Like, they're both really important. They're both really important. It's just, we shouldn't think this exclusive thing where everybody's got to just have one.

It's just not in the scriptures. Okay, another thing we do with this is teaching is obviously a part of it. So the question is, well, is that formal teaching?

Like I said, some people say, well, it's only behind a pulpit. Or is it also informal? Or is it only informal? Is discipleship only in the context of informal teaching, never in the form of preaching or reading a book or studying something?

No, it's, it's both. Okay. There are, there are times and places where we should have formal teaching and that helps make people than disciples. But if that's the only place you're getting

discipleship, you're not doing it the way Jesus did.

[48 : 31] You're not doing it the way Paul did. You're missing out. There has to be the Deuteronomy six, six to seven. And these words that I command you today should be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children.

You should talk to them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise, like there should be no limits to when we should help make each other disciples. So you get together with someone.

You're like, Hey, what are you reading the Bible? What's God teaching you? Like, what, what are you learning? Or, Hey, this is what I've been learning. Or what do you think about this topic? Like, what do you think about discipleship?

What do you think about drinking? Like how much should, how do we do drinking as Christians? Should we drink? How much we drink? You know, what about that? Or how do we, what about parenting? Like there's a lot of different views on parenting.

What do you believe about gentle parenting? What about this? Well, what does the Bible say? Or, you know, this is something that I was really convicted of in the scriptures. If you ever read this verse, man, this verse just like arrested me today.

[49 : 28] And we have these conversations or we have more diligent times where it's like, Hey, let's get together. We're going to study this. Let's get together. And I'm going to teach this. Or it's just, as you're going along the way, you notice things, right?

While you're, while you're doing life, you know, you just say, Hey, I noticed that you talked to your kid this way. Hey, I notice, you're kind of like a loner sometimes where you just kind of are more independent.

And that's not good. Like, let's, I want to, you could be breaking out against sound judgment. You're not really connected with us, you know, and you're noticing this. Hey, I noticed that you, you talk this way.

And I'm like, maybe, you know, the Bible talks about controlling your tongue and talks about speech being building up. And I'm not sure the way that you're talking, if that's a good thing, or have you thought about this when you do this and that that's discipleship as well.

Right. But it's both. There's the formal times of discipleship. This is what I'm doing right now is an important for discipleship, but it's also very important that when I'm going along the way and talking to people, we, we address things as they come up.

[50 : 30] Okay. Another important thing in the drill down is open hearts. Okay. 2 Corinthians 6 and 7 talks about opening your heart to people. I think realistically opening your homes to people.

What did they do in the early church? They met in the temple courts and in their homes. So what is it? Is it the big, big meeting in the temple courts, like on a Sunday gathering, or is it in homes?

It's both. Or are you a house church guy or a Sunday morning guy? Both. Like just everywhere. I don't care. Home, outside, inside, big group, small group. Like, why are we limiting this?

Okay. I want to open my heart. I want to open my home. I want to open my schedule so that discipleship can happen. Many times a hindrance to that is if your heart isn't open, your home isn't open, and your schedule isn't open, that isn't going to happen.

So much discipleship happens over kitchen tables, right? Or living room couches. Are we available for that? A few more here.

[51 : 28] Jesus, he did, he taught, he modeled, he did it together, and then he sent. He would teach and model it for them. He would do it together with them, and then he'd send them off on their, on their own to do it.

You see that pattern of how he did it? So that's what we do. You teach, model it, then do it with them. And then at some point in time, you got to let people do things on their own. That's the way Jesus did it.

Right? We also have to persevere with people, bear with people. Sometimes you think, oh, this discipleship's hard. Yeah. That's why Jesus said, bear with one another. You have to, it's just bear with it.

It's hard sometimes. It's grueling sometimes. It's waiting sometimes. And it takes time. It takes time and patience to inherit the promises. It takes time to build relationships.

It's like, wow, we've been doing this church for 10 months, and I'm still not really close to people, to certain people. Yeah. Keep going. Keep going. Well, I've been, I've been reaching out to this

person, trying to go across, trying to get more discipleship avenues there.

[52 : 28] It's just not happening. Well, you haven't been doing it for very long. Keep going. It takes time for people to believe that you love them, to trust you, to grow in relationship.

Relationship takes time. There's no relationship you have that's good, that didn't take time. And let's be honest, a lot of them take years. Do they not? In conclusion, 2 Timothy 4, 1 to 4, to wrap it up in the NIV, he says, in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing in his kingdom, I will give you this charge.

Preach the word, be prepared in season and out of season. Correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine.

Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. We got a lot of work cut out for us.

There's a lot of people looking to hear what their itching ears want to hear. What do we got to do? We got to be prepared in season and out of season. We got to teach, correct, rebuke, encourage, with great patience and careful instruction. In other words, we got to make disciples who make disciples.

[53 : 43] And we get to build that into our culture. How often would that be if it was just normal that everyone saw that I have, everyone has the possibility and the responsibility to make people disciples by either bringing them to Christ in the first place through preaching the gospel or teaching them to obey everything Jesus commanded.

We're supposed to do that. And ultimately, we should all be aiming to become spiritual fathers and mothers, examples that people can imitate, where we'd have true sons and daughters that, where there's just like this heightened level of exchange of the love, wisdom, and power of God.

We also need to know that that's not going to happen, you know, with everybody. And for some of us, it's not going to happen until we get more mature or we grow older. But let's build this into our culture.

Let's be intentional to say, hey, do we have a disciple making culture? And I'm sure we'll talk about this more and we'll have more discussions on it, maybe even some questions, maybe even some disagreements.

But I think it's really important as we're thinking about things to like, so into our culture of our church on the front end, that disciple making is one of them. Amen.