

# DISCIPLESHIP EVANGELISM

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Today we're going to continue to talk about being a disciple and how to make disciples of other people. I want to remind you that the Lord gave us a command not to go make converts, not to just get people to confess Jesus as their Lord and receive forgiveness of sins, but to make disciples. Although those first two are vital, and I'm not minimizing that at all, the real purpose has to be to go beyond being born again and to go on to maturity. The goal of a Christian, who is a disciple, should be to go and make disciples of other people.

I want to share some things specifically concerning our Discipleship Program that you've been going through. We've been ministering to you about how you can mature in the Lord and receive all these things. Now we want to shift our emphasis somewhat to how you can make disciples of other people, which was the Lord's command. Let me show you the necessity for this. First of all, He told us to go and make disciples, to bring people to maturity and able to reproduce. Our church world today hasn't done this. We've put the responsibility of getting people born again and their relationship with the Lord on what we call the clergy or ministers. We have evangelists who travel around, hold large crusades, and see tens of thousands of people make decisions for the Lord. Though some of them are not really born again but are just experiencing emotions, I'm sure there are people who are truly born again and have a relationship with the Lord. Most of the time, however, there's not an emphasis on going on and becoming a disciple, and that's not the way God intended it to be.

I compare this to a person who loves babies. It would be totally irresponsible to have a baby, be excited about it, but only like seeing it born. When you have a child, you have to assume responsibility to train and raise it. The Child Welfare Services would come after a person who had a child, rejoiced, threw it aside, and wanted to have another one. That's irresponsible, but in a sense, it's what the church has done. We tell people, "The main thing is to get born again, to confess Jesus as your Lord." When that happens, we pat them on the back and say, "Now you're a Christian. Believe God, study the Bible, and everything will be okay." That is not the Lord's emphasis.

Because of this we've produced people, many of whom have made heartfelt commitments to the Lord, but have no maturity. They are unable to reproduce their faith, because there is no material to help them. Instead of being positive witnesses for Jesus, they actually become negative witnesses. He intends us to go out and reach people in the way that they become full-fledged disciples and are able to reproduce their faith in others.

When I first got turned on to the Lord, I had such an excitement to share my faith with other people that I knocked on doors and started witnessing to everything that moved. I saw people born again, some of them just went through the motions to get me off their back, but I believe others had a real heartfelt conviction. But when I went back in a month or two, they would be right back in the same problems. They didn't have any maturity. I could see that if they really were born again, they certainly weren't ever going to be a reproductive, strong member of the body of Christ, able to reproduce their faith. I became frustrated.

At that point I came across some people who were emphasizing discipleship, and one of the illustrations they shared with me was this: If you led one person to the Lord every six months, separated yourself and discipled them to the point that they became a mature Christian who could reproduce their faith, at the end of six months there'd only be two Christians. Then if each one of you led one person to the Lord, separated yourselves and discipled them for six months, at the end of a year there'd be four Christians. This doesn't look comparable to a person who could lead a thousand people to the Lord in a crusade and get them to confess Jesus. Most people would say, "Well, this discipleship method only produces four converts in the first year, whereas the other method would produce a thousand converts. We have to go with the other one." The man who could lead a thousand people to the Lord would have led 35,000 people to the Lord. That's good, and nobody would criticize it; but it's just a drop in the bucket compared to the world population. Basically, that's the way the church has been functioning.

If we emphasize discipleship, the person who leads one person to the Lord every six months and those two do the same, in just a little over twelve and a half years they would evangelize more than the population of the world—over five and a half billion people. Some people think, "That can't be," but I challenge you to figure it out. I've multiplied it out, and in a little over twelve and a half years, one person discipling another person every six months, making them a reproducing member of the body of Christ, could evangelize five and a half billion people versus twelve and a half thousand people with the other method.

If we could use this Discipleship Evangelism Program to bring you to a place of maturity, if we could get you to where you not only experienced victory and maturity yourself but have a desire to go out and reproduce it in other people, if you became the trainer instead of the trainee, here are some of the things that could happen if only one person got a hold of this concept, followed the Lord to a place of maturity, and started discipling another person. If you only did this with one person per year, at the end of one year there would be you and the person you discipled—two. At the end of two years, there'd be four. But, if you could continue to follow that, at the end of ten years there'd be 1,024 people who had been discipled and were reproducing members of the body of Christ. If you continued, with only one person originally receiving this, at the end of twenty years there'd be over a million people. That's awesome. This is the method of multiplication the Lord established—going and making disciples, not going and making converts. It's by far the best way to expand the kingdom to reach people, but our mindset is looking for the quick fix. We're looking at statistics.

The statistics that very few people ever count are the negative statistics. What about the tens of thousands of people at a crusade who make a commitment to the Lord, how many are truly born again? I've heard Billy Graham, probably the premier evangelist of our day, say that eighty-five percent of the people in America who claim to be Christians are not truly born again. They've gone through the motions, but there was no heartfelt conversion. That amazes me. That story was secondhand, so I can't quote it as authoritative, but I don't have any reason to believe the person who reported it was wrong. Whether or not it's eighty-five percent, I certainly believe there's a large percentage today who profess Christianity, but don't possess it. There wasn't genuine, heartfelt faith in their heart. How many people go to large crusades, make commitments, go proclaim to be Christians, still have anger, bitterness, and jealousy, and become negative witnesses? If we want to count statistics, how many people have been turned away from the true Gospel because they saw someone who proclaimed Christianity and thought, "I'm as good as the hypocrites down there at church. I don't need it."

We count these statistics, and by anybody's estimation not all of them are heartfelt conversions. Even if every single person who claims to be a Christian was truly born again, we don't have this multiplying effect. We have placed the burden of converting people on just a few people, and that's never the way God intended it. He meant for every single member of the body of Christ, not only to receive salvation but to go on to maturity and become a reproducing member who is able to disciple other people. If ten people took this and did it, the statistics would be ten times as much. If a hundred people used this program, not only to be discipled, but to disciple other people, within ten years they would reach 102,000 people who are disciples, and in twenty years, 105,000,000 people. That's nearly half the population of the United States, and if they were not only professors but possessors of true Christianity, able to reproduce their faith, what a difference that would make.

The whole point is that discipleship is the method God set down for evangelizing the world. It not only blesses you, but as John 8:31-32 says, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make your free." The truth doesn't make you free until you continue in the Word. That's what God wants for each individual so they can experience His fullness, but it's also the method of evangelism that He set down. Whoever decided that was not the way to do it and substituted another method, it hasn't worked.

This is God's system, and that's the reason we call it Discipleship Evangelism. If you want to evangelize the world and see people come to the Lord, take people who are already professors and get them to live the abundant life and become positive witnesses, able to reproduce their faith and disciple other people. In a very short period of time we could be out of here, if we would follow God's plan.

I pray today that God speaks this to your heart to show you the value of His method. Over a twenty-year period of time, one of you getting a hold of this and becoming faithful could reach over a million people. Your life can count. You're important to God, and I encourage you to go on and become a disciple and a discipler of other people.

## DISCIPLESHIP EVANGELISM (Outline)

The goal of each disciple of Jesus should be to go and make more disciples of Jesus.

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, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (NIV).

If one man led 1,000 people to the Lord each year, in 35 years there would be 35,000 converts through his ministry. However, if the same man only led one person to the Lord every six months, then discipled that convert so that he too could share his faith the same way, then in 10 years, he would have made 1,048,576 converts. In 15 years, he would have evangelized over 1,000,000,000 people and in just over 16 years, he would have evangelized the present population of the entire world. Jesus’ plan of discipleship is the best.

## DISCIPLESHIP EVANGELISM (Teacher's Guide)

1. What does the Greek word "MATHETES" (disciple) mean?  
A learner—indicating thought accompanied by endeavor—a follower.
2. A. According to John 8:31, what is required to be Jesus' disciple?  
To continue in His Word.  
B. Then what will happen? (John 8:32)  
You shall know the truth and the truth will make you free.
3. A. What is Jesus' commission in Matthew 28:19-20?  
To make disciples of the nations.  
B. In the process of discipling, what will happen? (Matthew 28:19)  
People will be converted and baptized.  
C. Will you accept Jesus' commission to disciple others?

## DISCIPLESHIP EVANGELISM (Detailed Teacher's Guide)

NOTE: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being discipled. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

<sup>1</sup>The Greek word for “disciple,” “mathetes,” means “a learner—indicating thought accompanied by endeavor.” Jesus had more than twelve disciples, and the statements made in John 8:31-32 are intended for anyone who wants to be a follower of Jesus. True biblical faith in Jesus produces salvation, but being a “disciple” comes only through maturing in the knowledge of, and acting on, the Word of God.

<sup>2</sup>Notice that teaching is mentioned twice in the Matthew 28:19-20—the Great Commission. We have not been commanded to proclaim only, but we must explain also, and provide training. This is the cornerstone of Jesus' plan of evangelization.

The present day church has put the majority of its evangelistic efforts into just proclaiming the gospel with little or no thought to discipleship. The consequences have been that people have responded and been born again, but as a whole these new believers don't mature to a place where they can reproduce their Christian faith in others. This has placed the burden of evangelism on a few individuals and mass crusades.

If one man led 1,000 people to the Lord each year, in 35 years there would be 35,000 converts through his ministry. However, if the same man only led one person to the Lord every six months, then discipled that convert so that he too could share his faith the same way, then in 10 years, he would have 1,048,576 converts. In 15 years, he would have evangelized over 1,000,000,000 people, and in just over 16 years he would have evangelized the present population of the entire world. Jesus' plan of discipleship is the best.

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<sup>1</sup>(a) What does this Greek word MATHETES (disciple) mean?  
(b) According to John 8:31, what is required to be Jesus' disciple?  
(c) According to John 8:32, then what will happen?

<sup>2</sup>(a) What is Jesus' commission in Matthew 28:19-20?  
(b) In the process of discipling, what will happen? (Matthew 28:19, people will be converted and baptized).  
(c) Will you accept Jesus' commission to disciple others?

## DISCIPLESHIP EVANGELISM (Additional Information)

The Greek word “EVAGGELION” means “good news” or “gospel.” God Himself was the first great evangelizer or bringer of good news. After the fall, God brought good news to Adam and Eve concerning the seed that would crush the serpent’s head (Genesis 3:15). Again God brought good news to Abraham declaring, “And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:3). John the Baptist did the work of an evangelist in Luke 3:18, “John exhorted the people and preached the good news to them” (NIV).

The most extensive discipleship and evangelizing yet to come, must be carried out before the end comes. Matthew 24-14 states: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Christians have the command to preach the Word and make disciples of all nations (2 Timothy 4:2; Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15). Will you help us in this endeavor? “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

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