

## LESSON 1: What Discipleship Is:

### I. It is training to be like Christ

#### A. Key Verse: (Lk 6:40)

1. The difference between a "student" and a "disciple"
2. In our culture, "student" not the same as "disciple" any more.
3. In a student/teacher relationship...
  - a. The relationship is built on the information the teacher imparts
  - b. May not be much if any interaction outside the classroom
4. In a disciple/teacher relationship...
  - a. The relationship is based on the teacher
  - b. The disciple aims to learn from and imitate the teacher
  - c. The disciple is devoted to the teacher

#### B. Elements

1. Information - Facts the teacher imparts
2. Formation - Life change, adopting the teacher's values
3. Illustration: A new series from Ray Vanderlan - "In the dust of the Rabbi," idea is that disciples follow so close to the Rabbi they are literally in his dust

### II. It is Spiritually Disciplined

#### A. Key verse: (Jn 8:31)

1. "Continue" in "my" word... What is this?
2. It means listening to his teaching
3. It means following and obedience

#### B. Related verses:

1. On the "word" of God
  - a. (1 Tim 3:16) It is "inspired"
    - 1) Definition - To stimulate, or to breath air into
    - 2) It is "God-breathed"
    - 3) God's breath gives life - Gen 2:7
    - 4) The words of scripture are words of life
    - 5) This is why it is profitable for these things
  - b. (Eph 6:17) - It is the "sword of the Spirit"
    - 1) It is an offensive weapon of the Spirit
    - 2) Purpose is for spiritual warfare against the unseen forces of evil
  - c. (Heb 4:12) - Sharper than any two edged sword
    - 1) Can get to inner self like nothing else can

- 2) It is the spirit's primary surgical tool to carve, form, and shape you into the image of Christ
- d. Renewal of the Spirit and Being immersed in the word go hand in hand
- 2. On discipline
  - a. (1 Cor 9:25) - Athletic imagery, training, focus,
  - b. (Heb 5:14) - Still using athletic imagery
    - 1) Senses are "trained" (grk: gymnazo)
    - 2) Discipline of training is involved
- C. What this means
  - 1. Discipline means having a regiment
    - a. Bible reading needs to be a central part of the "discipline"
    - b. Meditation and prayer goes hand in hand with Bible reading
      - 1) Ps 1:1-2 - Characteristic of the godly person
      - 2) Ps 119:97-104 - Meditation on it gives wisdom
  - 2. Studies and statistics
    - a. 1 out of 6 adults are involved in a relational process related to spiritual growth. Those that are...
      - 1) 69% - Small Group
      - 2) 20% - Adult Sunday School
      - 3) 14% - One to one mentoring
      - 4) 11% - Special class
      - 5) 3% - Online training/interaction toward discipleship
    - b. Fewer than 1 in 5 believers have any specific measurable goals related to spiritual development
    - c. In regard to goals, 8 of 10 believers named success in family, career development, and financial achievements as top goals.

### **III. It is active in servanthood, not merely passive recipient**

- A. Key verse: (Jn 15:8)
  - 1. Being faithful means being "fruitful"
  - 2. Fruitfulness means giving, not taking
- B. Related passages:
  - 1. (1 Pet 2:9) - You are a royal priesthood
    - a. We don't have "professional priests"
    - b. Some coined the phrase, "priesthood of all believers"
    - c. There is not a clergy/laity split
  - 2. (1 Cor 12:7) - To "each" is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the "common good"
    - a. What we receive is for the "common good"

- b. Every member is a minister
- c. Each person has a ministry and service to render for God
- 3. (Rom 12:6) - Each is to exercise his or her gift
- 4. (1 Pet 4:10) - Each is to employ their gift as a "steward"
  - a. We are "stewards" of the manifold grace of God
  - b. What you have is not your own
  - c. God's intent is for you to serve

C. What this means

- 1. Discipleship goes beyond Sunday worship
  - a. Worship on Sunday is 1/7<sup>th</sup> of what you do
  - b. 2/7<sup>ths</sup> of what you do is the rest of the week
- 2. Discipleship is not a spectator sport
  - Do we see it as such?
    - 1) We have a "stage" up front in worship
    - 2) We make evaluative comments at the end of the service - "bad song service, good sermon, etc."
    - 3) Worship, like everything else, is a participative thing, not a spectator thing
- 3. It means being stewards of what God has entrusted to us

#### IV. It is Holistic and not merely private

- A. Key verse: (Jn 8:31-32)
  - 1. Did not say, "you shall know A truth, but THE truth"
  - 2. There is only one truth, that is God's truth
  - 3. (Jn 1:14) - Jesus is full of grace and TRUTH
- B. Our faith intersects with all of life and shapes it
  - 1. Examples:
    - a. ()Slave master relationships
    - b. ()Instructions on debt
    - c. ()Instructions on governing authorities
    - d. ()Never says to completely withdraw
  - 2. Theme of Jesus' ministry: Kingdom
    - a. (Jn 18:36) - Not of this world. What does that mean?
    - b. (Mt 5-7) - Kingdom manifesto?
      - 1) Different values, socially, economically, politically, spiritually, etc.
      - 2) Kingdom is alongside, interspersed with world (parable of the weeds and tares, (Mt 13:25f)
      - 3) We are his kingdom
    - c. Goal - Kingdom of world become Kingdom of Christ (Rev 11:15)
  - 3. All truth is God's truth

- a. There is not one thing true in church and another thing true in school, in the lab, in politics, in public life, etc.
- b. No dichotomy between religious truth and scientific, religious and political, religious and historical, etc.
- c. All true in God's truth and is universal

C. What this means

- 1. The arena to live out our faith is all of life
- 2. Don't live by one set of rules for the world, and another for church
- 3. (Mt 5:15) - We are the light of the "world," not just the light of the church
- 4. ILL: South African - Truth and Reconciliation Commission - Theologically based, extremely so...

## **V. Counter-cultural faith (not blending in)**

A. Key Verse: (Lk 14:25-27)

- 1. May not even blend in with family any more
- 2. Need to take up cross of Christ and follow him

B. Related scripture:

- 1. (1 Pet 2:11) - We are "aliens"
- 2. (1 Pet 2:9) - We are a "holy nation"
- 3. (Jn 14:18-20) - In following Christ, you may be persecuted too

C. What this means

- 1. Need to avoid falling in trap of being like the world in values
  - a. Not limited to - Don't commit adultery, murder, etc.
  - b. Most people don't do these things
- 2. Some values to avoid include subtle ones in DNA of our culture
  - a. Individualism
  - b. Consumerism
  - c. Materialism
  - d. Relativism
- 3. Historically, committed Christians have been an agent of godly change in the cultures in which they live

## **VI. Values the church as blood-bought essential (not optional)**

A. Key verse: (Jn 13:35)

- 1. Sign of discipleship is our love for each other
- 2. We love each other because we are brethren
- 3. (Acts 20:28) - Purchased church with his own blood

**B. Related passages:**

1. 1 Cor 12:14-18 - The image of the body of Christ
  - a. God places each person in their place in the body
  - b. The construction of the body is God's work
  - c. (v.21) - Cannot say we have no need of each other
2. Discipleship happens in community
  - a. (Mk 3:14) - Twelve disciples to "be with him"
  - b. (Rom 10:12-14) - The need for a person
    - 1) How shall they hear without a preacher?
    - 2) Does not say, how shall they hear without tracts, passing out Bibles, etc.
    - 3) Need a person to guide another
  - c. (Acts 8:30-31) - Someone needed to guide the Eunuch
  - d. Paul trains Timothy (Acts 16:1f; 1 Tim 1:2) & Titus (Tit 1:4)
    - 1) Didn't just hand them Bibles and sent them out
    - 2) Trained them in community
    - 3) (Mt 28:19) - Make disciples, not go pass out Bibles
3. The need for others
  - a. (Prov 27:17) - Iron sharpens iron
  - b. (Eccl 4:9-12) - Two are better than one
  - c. (Heb 10:24-25) - Assemble and encourage as a habit

**C. What this means**

1. We need to be connected intimately with the church
2. Fellowship, confession, discipleship in the context of Christian community is important

**VII. Reproducing through multiplication****A. Key verse: (Mt 28:19-20)**

1. They were to make disciples
  - a. Involves baptizing
  - b. Involves teaching
2. This meant reproduction - Teach them what I taught you...

**B. Related passages**

1. (2 Cor 4:6-7) - Analogy of a clay oil lamp
  - a. We are the vessels
  - b. The light of the Gospel is in us
  - c. God intends for us to let it shine
2. (Acts 8:4) - Example of those letting it shine
  - a. Everyone, not just professionals, was sharing the word
  - b. We are ALL to be lights

## C. What this means

1. Making a lifestyle of sharing your story
2. The Gospel is central to your life
- \*3. The end goal is not merely converts, but reproducing disciples

**EVALUATION:**

<i>On a scale of 1 to 5 rate yourself on these characteristics of discipleship</i>					
<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Evaluate Yourself</b>				
<b>Spiritually Disciplined:</b> Do you have a proactive, disciplined regimen or plan for spiritual growth?	No Regiment/Plan			Regiment/Plan	
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Active:</b> Is your faith actively expressed in participation, servanthood, etc., or is it more passive, just taking things in?	Passive Recipient			Active Giving	
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Holistic:</b> Does your faith blatantly guide and determine your everyday direction, values, and attitudes, even in public, or is it private?	Private			All of Life	
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Counter-Cultural:</b> Do your actions and attitudes reflect "alien" values, or civic and cultural values (going with the flow)?	Blending In			Counter-Cultural	
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Values Church as Essential:</b> Does your attitude and <u>actions</u> demonstrate that the church is essential, or optional?	Non-Essential			Essential	
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Reproducing through Multiplication:</b> Do you look for and make opportunities to share your faith part of your lifestyle, or avoid it?	Avoid			Share Faith	
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Training to Be Like Christ:</b> Do you intentionally strive to be like Christ in attitude & action?	Not like Christ			Like Christ	
	1	2	3	4	5