

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 1/7th of what you do
 - b. 2/7^{ths} 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>				
Characteristic	Evaluate Yourself			
Spiritually Disciplined: Do you have a proactive, disciplined regiment or plan for spiritual growth?	No Regiment/Plan 1	2	3	Regiment/Plan 4 5
Active: Is your faith actively expressed in participation, servanthood, etc., or is it more passive, just taking things in?	Passive Recipient 1	2	3	Active Giving 4 5
Holistic: Does your faith blatantly guide and determine your everyday direction, values, and attitudes, even in public, or is it private?	Private 1	2	3	All of Life 4 5
Counter-Cultural: Do your actions and attitudes reflect "alien" values, or civic and cultural values (going with the flow)?	Blending In 1	2	3	Counter-Cultural 4 5
Values Church as Essential: Does your attitude and <u>actions</u> demonstrate that the church is essential, or optional?	Non-Essential 1	2	3	Essential 4 5
Reproducing through Multiplication: Do you look for and make opportunities to share your faith part of your lifestyle, or avoid it?	Avoid 1	2	3	Share Faith 4 5
Training to Be Like Christ: Do you intentionally strive to be like Christ in attitude & action?	Not like Christ 1	2	3	Like Christ 4 5