

Discipling

Helping Others to Cherish Christ

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Five Points Community Church
www.5pointsc.org

Session 1 - The Basics of Discipling

Question 1: What is a disciple?

A *Christian* disciple is someone who has committed his life to following Jesus, his teacher and Lord.

Question 2: What is discipling?

Discipling is a one-on-one mentoring of one Christian with another with the goal of helping each other grow in Christ.

Characteristics of discipling:

- INTENTIONAL

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20).

- ENCOURAGEMENT
- CHRISTIANS
- WORD of GOD and PRAYER

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-18; cf. Isaiah 55:10-11; James 1:21; 2 Peter 1:3-4).

- LOVING

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers"(1 John 3:16).

- RELATIONAL

Question 3: Should every Christian disciple?

Answer: Yes.

A common false assumption that too many Christians make: Discipling and care of members' (especially their spiritual growth) is the responsibility of professional pastors, not the congregation.

BIBLICAL Goal: For the congregation—the everyday members of your church—to disciple one another in the Word.

“One another” passages.

- "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35).
- “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves” (Romans 12:10).
- “Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law” (Rom 13:18).
- “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God” (Romans 15:7).
- “I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another” (Romans 15:14).
- “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love” (Ephesians 4:2)
- “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32).
- “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing”(1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Question #4: What happens to the church when every Christian is discipling?

“Culture” – the whole personality of the congregation is making and shepherding disciples.

Opportunity to Reflect: What's your initial reaction to this conversation about discipling? Is it negative or positive? Ask the Lord to help you approach this subject with an open heart and mind, and a willingness to obey what he asks of you...

Session 2 - Why Spend Time Intentionally Discipling?

Reason #1: Because God's love compels you.

- Because the love of God changes our life.
- Because the love of God is never meant to be hoarded.
- Because you have an obligation to show Christ's love to others.

Reason #2: Because the church grows together.

"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Ephesians 4:15-16).

Reason #3: Because the Bible commands you to...

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt 28:18-20).

Reason #4: Because leaders can't help everyone

Reason #5: Because weaker Christians need your help...

Reason #6: For your joy!

³I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴In all my prayers for all of you, I always *pray with joy* ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now” (Philippians 1:3-5).

“¹If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ²then *make my joy complete* by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose” (Philippians 2:1-2).

“¹Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, *my joy and crown*, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!” (Philippians 4:1).

“¹⁹Everyone has heard about your obedience, *so I am full of joy over you*; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.” (Romans 16:19).

“⁴I have great confidence in you; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles *my joy knows no bounds*.... ¹³By all this we are encouraged. In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. ¹⁴*I had boasted to him about you*, and you have not embarrassed me. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting about you to Titus has proved to be true as well. ¹⁵And his affection for you is all the greater when he remembers that you were all obedient, receiving him with fear and trembling. ¹⁶*I am glad I can have complete confidence in you*” (2 Corinthians 7:4, 13-16).

“¹⁹For what is our hope, *our joy*, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? ²⁰Indeed, you are our glory *and joy*” (1 Thess 2:19-20).

“⁴It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us” (2 John 1:4).

Question: Is this kind of joy selfish? Does a joy in personally helping to mature disciples lead us to be man-centered?

Question: Does discipling lead to pride?

Reason #7: For God's glory!

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Opportunity to Reflect:

1. Which of these reasons gives you motivation to disciple other Christians? List the ones that are most helpful for you...
2. If you find that you are still not motivated to spend time encouraging other believers to grow then take some time this week to contemplate, turn over, “soak in” the reasons for discipling that we have set out in today’s lesson. As you consider biblical reasons, I hope you will find that the Word begins to motivate your heart.

Session 3 - Encouraging Careful Bible Study

Living By God's Word

Giving your advice/opinion or giving them God's Word?

“Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He [God] humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD” (Deuteronomy 8:3).

God's people live by God's Word.

The Importance of the Word

Scripture is authoritative because it is made up of God's own Words (2 Peter 1:21).

Scripture builds a firm foundation for our life (Matt 7:24-27).

Scripture also says that it will fulfill all that it has set out to do (Isaiah 55:11).

Scripture is useful for the most important aspects of the Christian life (2 Tim 3:16-17).

Scripture is powerful enough to penetrate our thoughts and heart (Heb 4:12).

The Goal of our Discipling

The Role of Bible Study in Discipling

Inductive Bible Study

1. *Observation.* What does the passage say? That is, what are the basic facts of the situation? Think about things like: Who is in the story? What did they say or do? What happens as a result?
2. *Interpretation.* What does it mean? How are we to understand this story once we looked at all of the facts? What does this passage teach me about God, myself, or the world around me?
3. *Application.* How does this apply to me? How does this text of Scripture have relevance for my life?

Don Whitney recommends the following steps for meditation:

- Select an appropriate passage. Pick a specific passage from your reading that strikes you. This could be of any length, but probably on the order of a few verses.
- Re-read it several times. Also, read the context surrounding the passage.
- Rewrite it into your own words. Writing things down will force you to think more carefully about what the text says.
- Pray through the text.
- Read less, meditate more. Think about it and turn it over in your mind.
- Look for and pray for applications.

Conclusion: Build Your Life on God's Word!

"It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God' " (Matt 4:4).

Opportunity to Reflect:

1. Maybe you readily admit that the Bible is authoritative, but you don't personally spend much time in the Word yourself. What obstacles prevent you from committing to spend regular time in God's Word?
2. Think about reading a Bible passage together with a friend. Who could that be? What Bible passage would be good to read together?

Session 4 - Encouraging Prayer, Accountability and Biblical Examples

Part 1. Encouraging Biblical Prayer

I encourage my friend to pray regularly and consistently *on their own*.

But I also want to make prayer *a part of my discipling meetings*.

- I want to pray together.
- We show them how to pray.

4 D's of Prayer

Deadly. (1) Lazy (2) Busy (3) Apathetic

Dependence. (4) Pride

Desire.

Discipline.

Part 2. Encouraging Biblical Accountability

Christians Should Pursue Accountability

We start with three biblical reasons why we want pursue accountability.

1. Scripture Encourages Confession

“Against you and you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight” (Psalm 51:4).

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed” (James 5:16).

“He who conceals his sin does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy” (Prov 28:13).

2. Scripture Warns Us About Self-Deceit

“See to it brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness” (Heb 3:12-13).

3. Scripture Encourages Honesty about Weakness

“Since many are boasting in the way the world, I too will boast...If I must boast, I will boast of the things that *show my weakness*” (2 Cor 11:18, 30).

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12:7).

“For when I am weak, then I am strong”(2 Cor 12:10).

The Need for Accountability

Guidelines for Accountability Relationships

1. Ask good questions (Prov 20:5).

2. Don’t be scared to confront (Prov 26:5-6)

Proverbs 26:5-6 says, “Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself. Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.”

3. Be honest (Prov 24:26)

4. Be vulnerable (2 Cor 6:11-13)

5. Be gracious (Col 4:6; Prov 15:1).

6. Be humble (Jam 4:6-10)

7. Be encouraging (Acts 15:32)

8. Be available (Gal 6:10)

9. Be Word-centered (Heb 4:12-13)

Part 3. Encouraging Biblical Examples (Life on Life Disciping)

Discipling should be *taught*, but it must also be *caught* as people see Christianity in action.

As people see discipleship in action, they must then be *challenged to live it out*.

Opportunity to Reflect:

1. Do you struggle in your own prayer life? If so, write out what gets in the way of your praying more often. Ask the Lord to help you to pray to Him.
2. Who can you commit to praying with this coming week? Can this person be a regular prayer partner with you? If you are discipling someone, how can prayer become a more significant part of your time together?
3. Do you have someone in your life in which you are open and transparent about the nitty-gritty details of your life? Does this friend know your deepest and worst struggles? If you do not have someone like this, ask the Lord help you find someone. Who might you begin an accountability relationship with?
4. If you are discipling someone, write out a question or two that probe more deeply into his or her life...
5. In setting an example for younger believers, can you list one way in which you can incorporate someone into your life?

Session 5 - Overcoming Barriers and Excuses to Discipling

6 Thoughts that draw us away from discipling others. (How might you convince yourself *not* to disciple others?)

Excuse #1: I don't want to be in a position of "authority".

In and through Jesus, we see the posture of one in "authority" is that of a loving servant.

"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet" (John 13:14).

"Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:25-28).

Excuse #2: Intentional discipling relationships turn friends into projects.

What is biblical love? In John 15, Jesus says that *real love* is when we love others as Jesus has loved us.

"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Now remain in my love...My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:1, 12-13).

Ephesians 5:1 – 2: "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

Excuse #3: I just don't feel like it, and don't have time for it

To challenge your Christian friends to live their life with Christ at the center is the most loving thing you can ever do for them.

Many of us carry around *static expectations* for our relationships—we don't have the time to do *all* the things that might help, so we don't bother doing *anything* to help.

Excuse #4: I don't have anything that I can "teach"

Throughout the book of Titus, Paul argues that one of the best things we can do is to remind other believers about the basic truths of the gospel.

¹Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, ²to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men. ³At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. ⁴But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. ⁸This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone" (Titus 3:1-8).

Excuse #5: I'm not gifted to disciple others. Others are simply more gifted than I am. Let them disciple.

Discipling is fundamentally about building a bridge between a person's life and God's truth.

Excuse #6: I'm fearful that I'm going to mess up.

- 1 Corinthians 16:10-11
- 1 Corinthians 1:25-27
- 2 Timothy 1:7
- 1 Tim. 4:12

We are all sinners; when we stumble, we need to face our mistakes.

Opportunity to Reflect:

1. Write out one or two barriers and excuses that you have for discipling. Then write a *biblical* response to your *unbiblical* reasons. If you can't think of a biblical response to your excuses, ask one of your elders or a close friend to help you.

2. Think about your schedule, and think about how to make an insane schedule saner so that you have time to start pouring into others. Look particularly for things that you can dump that are of lesser value. (Example: reading newspaper versus having a breakfast meeting with a friend every week.)

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Resources for Further Reading

Collin Marshall & Tony Payne's *The Trellis and the Vine*

Mark Dever's *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus*

Deepak Reju is a pastor, husband to Sarah (since 2001), father of 2 boys and 3 girls. Feel free to reach out to him at –

- Email: DeepakReju@capbap.org
- Twitter: @DeepakReju
- Facebook: Deepak Reju

About the Biblical Counseling Coalition

The Biblical Counseling Coalition is helping to bring the God's Word to hurting people throughout the world. Deepak serves on the Board of Directors. For more information visit www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org OR email Curtis.Solomon@biblicalcc.org