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DEVELOPING DISCIPLE-MAKERS AT FLINTVILLE FIRST
BAPTIST CHURCH IN FLINTVILLE, TENNESSEE

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DEVELOPING DISCIPLE-MAKERS AT FLINTVILLE FIRST
BAPTIST CHURCH IN FLINTVILLE, TENNESSEE

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I dedicate this project to the Lord God. May He be glorified in all I say and do. I am forever indebted to my Christian parents and their uncompromising faith in Christ and His teachings. I am thankful for my oldest brother, Jeff Moran, for living a godly example and teaching me the importance of learning the Word of God. I praise God for our three children, who make life so much more abundant. Most of all, I dedicate this work to my life partner and wife, Christy, who has been my right arm and whom I could not do without.

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PREFACE

I want to recognize the wonderful faculty at Southern Seminary. They opened my eyes, helped me to drink deep from the well of biblical knowledge, and challenged me to be biblical in all I say and do. They were the first institution that motivated me to be my best. I want to especially thank my faculty supervisor, Dr. Timothy Beougher, for his patience, sacrifice, and wise counsel. I give thanks to Central Baptist Church in Corbin, Kentucky, who taught me how to have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. I am thankful for Flintville First Baptist Church and their love, support, and trust in me as their pastor.

Josh Moran

Flintville, Tennessee

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

At the heart of the New Testament church is the task of making disciples. This task involves more than leading an unbeliever to faith in Jesus as Christ. It also includes giving a new believer the tools to walk with the Lord daily (Luke 9:23), to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Savior (2 Pet 3:18), and to play one's role in multiplying the kingdom of God. The purpose of this project is to teach members at Flintville First Baptist Church (FFBC) to replicate themselves by calling the lost to repentance and teaching all believers to follow the commandments of Christ. This is the essence of a disciple-maker (Matt 28:18-20).

Context

This ministry project took place within the context of FFBC in Flintville, Tennessee, a rural farming community. FFBC has many genuine followers of Christ. These men and women love the Lord and have walked with Jesus for multiple decades, but a dire need exists for training and exhorting these believers to go further in their walk and their efforts to make disciples. Many at FFBC believe that a disciple is made when one is converted to Christianity. Some would take it a step further and say that a disciple is made upon conversion and commitment to church attendance. Others would argue that a disciple is made upon conversion, attendance, and service in God's church. The problem with all these definitions is that they miss the mark. Biblical discipleship develops believers who make disciples. When believers are committed to reproducing disciples, they will intentionally live godly lives and make opportunities to help unbelievers and believers to know God at a deeper level.

Currently, FFBC makes many efforts throughout the year to develop disciples. Guests frequent the Sunday morning service that has an evangelistic invitation. Members make visits in the community once a month; although, the visitation is poorly attended. Members canvas the community with revival flyers during each of our planned revival meetings. Guests are common during our Wednesday night children and youth activities. The annual Vacation Bible School is well planned, executed, and attended. We have several planned fellowships and meals throughout the year that members invite guests to as well as unusual ministry efforts like showing gospel focused movies or gospel singings. The WMU ministers to the local school by feeding teachers and faculty. The Brotherhood Ministry works service projects in the community each year. Ladies in the church run a food pantry. Overall, many faithful efforts are made to be a light in the community where FFBC is planted; however, these efforts fall short of the example Jesus displayed in the Gospel accounts.

Members of FFBC tend to equate disciple-making as something done at or through the church, but Jesus invited people to be his disciples everywhere He went. Disciple-making was a way of life for our Savior. The problem in Flintville is that people are mission-minded when they are at church, but are not on mission for Jesus every day of the week. Evangelistic programs and organized efforts are good, needed, and useful, but are never meant to replace a Christian's responsibility to make disciples as they go about their life. Planned events are meant to provide valuable training and encouragement for church members to evangelize on a regular basis outside the doors of the church. Moreover, there are far too many people in our community who will never attend any church. If the only chance of hearing the gospel message revolves around unbelievers coming to the church building, then the body of Christ has failed them. The gospel message is far too important to share only while at a church-sponsored function.

A commitment to disciple-making will not only grow the church numerically, but will also deepen the spiritual lives of current members as they live out The Great

Commission. Actively engaging in regular evangelism challenges believers to walk with the Lord and gives great encouragement as they faithfully testify of God's greatness. The more believers faithfully share the gospel the more they need to depend on God for strength, direction, answers, courage, grace, perseverance and more. Developing disciple-makers will raise up new leadership, and will place a priority on teaching the next generation to fear the Lord. An inwardly focused church will eventually die, but an outward focused church will outlast its present membership by teaching the following generations to know God and make Him known.

Rationale

Failing to develop disciple-makers will result in needless individuals spending eternity in hell paying for their sins. The Bible clearly teaches that an individual faces judgment upon physical death (Heb 9:27). This judgment results in eternal death or eternal life (John 3:16). The eternal destiny of every soul in Flintville, Tennessee is what is at stake when it comes to making disciples. If believers truly love their neighbors as themselves, they will sacrifice to see that every individual is challenged with the gospel message. It is easy for the church to focus on something other than making disciples. Even good things, like raising money for the building program, often take the focus of our efforts rather than learning how to be and make disciples. This project will focus on the fundamental reason FFBC exists.

Moreover, proper worship of God is at stake. He deserves the praise and adoration of all people. How will the lost ever rightly praise God if they are not instructed by God's Word to become children of God? Believers who place little emphasis on disciple-making are robbing God of the praise and honor He is rightfully due, and will be responsible of the blood of the wicked because they failed to warn them of their need of repentance and saving faith (Ezek 3:18). A disciple-making program would release FFBC members from the blood-guilt of failing to tell their neighbor of

redemption through Christ and at the same time it would save souls enabling persons to rightfully praise God through the forgiveness available by the blood of Jesus.

In May of 2017 FFBC celebrated 150 years of existence. At times in its history, the church has boasted an average Sunday School attendance of 200+ persons. The community has since suffered from the closing of the local railway, and now Flintville has a population of 627.¹ FFBC has plateaued like most Southern Baptist churches. The congregation currently averages around 100 people in Sunday School. It has not seen significant growth in many decades. The congregation is significantly older, and if nothing changes within the next ten to twenty years the average attendance will drop significantly as the core church members die off. These circumstances all highlight the importance of developing disciple-makers within this community.

Purpose

The purpose of the project was to develop disciples to be disciple-makers at Flintville First Baptist Church in Flintville, Tennessee.

Goals

Three goals guided this ministry project. These goals progressed as steps to grow members of FFBC to become biblical disciple-makers.

1. The first goal was to assess the disciple-making habits and practices of regular attending adult Sunday school members.
2. The second goal was to develop a six-session curriculum to train, equip, and convict participants to make disciples as a way of life.
3. The third goal was to teach regular attending adult Sunday school members to become disciple-makers.

¹ United States Census Bureau, American Fact Finder (2010), accessed February 15, 2016, http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml#.

Research Methodology

Three goals determined the effectiveness of this project. The first goal assessed the current disciple-making habits and practices of regular attending adult Sunday school members. Prior to the first teaching session, a pre-test Disciple-Making Survey² (DMS) was administered to the six adult Sunday school classes. This survey gauged participants' daily spiritual habits and disciple-making efforts. To ensure credibility and participation, the surveys were anonymous. Participants developed their own identification number so that pre-test and post-test surveys could be compared. This goal is considered successfully met when at least fifteen participants completed the pre-test DMS and the results were recorded electronically yielding better analysis of completed surveys.

The second goal was to develop a six-session curriculum that trained, equipped, and convicted participants to grow as disciple-makers. The analyzed data collected in the first goal helped determine the emphasis of the curriculum. The curriculum focused on practicing spiritual habits to prepare the heart and mind of the disciple-maker. These habits include the following: submersing one's self in the Word; developing a healthy prayer life; committing to a local church; and developing a concern for the lost. The curriculum was measured by one FFBC deacon, one pastor, one ministry director, and one local associational leader. This expert panel utilized a rubric to evaluate the curriculum's clarity, biblical faithfulness, and relevance in developing disciple-makers at FFBC.³ This goal was accomplished when at least 90 percent of the evaluation criteria were successfully met. If 90 percent of the evaluation criteria were not successfully met,

² See appendix 1. ²All of the research instruments used in the project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

³ See appendix 3.

the curriculum was revised until it reached or exceeded the 90 percent evaluation standard.

The third goal was to teach regular attending adult Sunday school members to become disciple-makers via the curriculum developed in the previous goal. Following the six-week training, the post-test DMS, utilized in goal 1, was re-administered.⁴ A t-test for dependent samples was utilized to measure whether the curriculum had a statistically significant positive effect on the dependent group. A t-test for dependent samples compares the pretest and post-test data collected from a single group to ensure that the variations in score are not left to chance, but that actual learning occurred.⁵ This goal was considered accomplished when at least fifteen Sunday school members showed an improved positive statistical difference.

Definitions, Limitation, and Delimitations

The following definitions are relevant to this project.

Disciple. A disciple is “a committed follower of Jesus Christ who seeks to live a life marked by continued growth in understanding and obedience.”⁶

Disciple-Maker. A disciple-maker seeks to aid believers in their growth and calls the lost to become disciples.

Only one limitation is placed on this project. It is limited by the church calendar. Sundays that involve holiday weekends are restricted to only a morning service. The evening services are canceled for that day and affected the potential to teach participants the developed curriculum. Additionally, evening services that occurred on the fifth Sunday of the month were dedicated to a song and testimonial service.

⁴ See appendix 4.

⁵ Neil J. Salkind, *Statistics for People (Who Think) They Hate Statistics*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2008), 189-91.

⁶ J. Arnold, and S. Black, *The Big Book on Small Groups* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), chap. Resources, sec., chap. 1.

There were two delimitations for this project. First, the project was limited to adult Sunday school classes to allow for the greatest potential impact on FFBC. Second, it was limited to twenty-one weeks, which includes the initial assessment, curriculum development, intervention, and post-assessment.

Conclusion

Disciple-makers are an integral part of every church. They determine the health and impact of the local church. Without disciple-makers, a church will eventually close its doors losing its influence on the community. A church with mature disciple-makers will impact the community, surrounding areas, and the world.

CHAPTER 2
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR
DEVELOPING DISCIPLE-MAKERS

Introduction

Scripture provides all believers a clear imperative, a supernatural enablement, and practical examples of how to make disciples. The following four passages will display these aspects of disciple-making.

The Clear Imperative

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ inaugurated a new era in time called the Church Age.¹ Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 prophesy of this new era. Consequently, it is not a surprise that Jesus would commemorate this new era with a monumental occasion—The Great Commission of Matthew 28:16-20.

The foundation of The Great Commission is the resurrection of Jesus Christ.² Immediately preceding The Great Commission is a passage of Scripture that is often called “the false commission”³ (28:11-15). In this passage, the Jewish religious leaders attempt to deny the resurrection by bribing the Roman guards to put forth the narrative that the disciples stole Jesus’ body. H. A. Ironside argues, “Had the body of the Lord Jesus Christ never come forth from the tomb, it would have been silent evidence that He

¹ W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *Matthew 1-7: A Shorter Commentary*, The International Critical Commentary, vol. 1 (London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 545.

² Manlio Simonetti, *Matthew 14-28*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament, vol. 1b (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 312.

³ Grant R. Osborne and Clinton E. Arnold, *Matthew*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 1072.

was either a deceiver or deceived when He declared that He was to give His life as a ransom for many.”⁴ However, if the resurrection is a true-life event, then a great commission is warranted for the Church Age. Many theologians speak of The Great Commission as the climax of Matthew’s gospel. For example Peter F Ellis states, “In Matthew's gospel, the actions and the ideas (theology) progress steadily to the climactic missionary mandate of Matthew 28:18-20, which provides not only a summary of the central themes of the gospel but a clue to its movement as well.”⁵

A frequent word used in The Great Commission is the Greek word *πάντα*, meaning “all.” It is used four times in Matthew 28:18-20. This word is fitting because it adequately communicates Jesus’ deity. In verse 18, *πάντα* is used to describe the universal authority of Jesus.⁶ In verse 20, *πάντα* is used to describe the universal presence of Jesus.⁷ Only the divine possesses this universal authority and presence; therefore, He is worthy of His followers making disciples of *πάντα* nations (28:19). Furthermore, Jesus is worthy of His disciples’ obedience in *πάντα* of His commandments (28:20). This one little word is influential in demonstrating Jesus’ deity and authority to give such a tremendous mandate as The Great Commission.

The result of The Great Commission is that Jesus’ disciples will make disciples, and these disciples will also be involved in making more disciples. Involvement in making disciples is not optional; it is the natural desire of a genuine

⁴ H. A. Ironside, *Matthew, An Ironside Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005), 252.

⁵ Peter F. Ellis, *Matthew: His Mind and His Message* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1974), 24.

⁶ David L. Turner, *Matthew*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 687.

⁷ Turner, *Matthew*.

convert to Christ.⁸ R. T. France describes a genuine disciple: “The only appropriate response is to join the eleven disciples in worship and obedience to the Lord of heaven and earth, to play one’s own part in the proclamation of the good news of the kingdom of God to all the nations, and to revel in the assurance that despite the worst that a hostile world can offer, ‘I am with you all the time until the end of the age.’”⁹ J. I. Packer also describes the Christian’s responsibility:

The commission to publish the gospel and make disciples was never confined to the apostles. Nor is it now confined to the church’s ministers. It is a commission that rests upon the whole church collectively, and therefore upon each Christian individually. All God’s people are sent to . . . ‘shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life.’¹⁰

John Stott agrees, “If we are not taking an active part in Christian witness, we are not merely ineffective; we are positively in revolt against Christ.”¹¹ A further verse-by-verse examination of The Great Commission will display the need to be intentional in making disciples of all nations.

Exposition of Matthew 28:16-20

Matthew 28:16 makes the first reference in Scripture to a group known as “the eleven disciples.”¹² The betrayal and suicide of Judas Iscariot explain the new reference. The interesting thing to note is the assumed reinstatement of Peter into the group after his three-fold denial of Jesus. “The eleven” were commanded to meet Jesus on a specified mountain in Galilee.

There is great significance in the fact that Jesus had His disciples meet Him on

⁸ Ironside, *Matthew*, 260.

⁹ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 1109.

¹⁰ J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 49.

¹¹ John R. W. Stott, *Personal Evangelism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1964), 7.

¹² Donald Alfred Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33b (Dallas: Word Books, 1995), 883.

a mountain in Galilee. Mountains are places where God gives paradigm-changing declarations. Abraham learned of God's provision upon Mount Moriah, where he took Isaac to offer him as a sacrifice. Moses ascended Mt. Sinai to receive the law. Peter, James, and John ascended a mountain where they witnessed the transfiguration. The greatest sermon ever preached is known as The Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 15:29-30 Jesus healed large crowds of sick people upon a mountain. It is no wonder that Jesus ordered his disciples to a mountain to give the church its marching orders for millennia to come.

It is also fitting that the disciples meet Jesus in the mountains of Galilee because Jesus' ministry began in Galilee as a fulfillment of a prophecy spoken in Isaiah 9:1-2.¹³ According to Matthew 4:15, Galilee is known as the land of the Gentiles. A commission that intends to reach "all nations" is fittingly given in a region known as "Galilee of the Gentiles."

Matthew 28:17 highlights the fact that upon seeing Jesus some amongst the crowd of disciples worshipped Him and others doubted. Interestingly, the Greek word προσεκύνησαν, meaning "they worshipped," does not possess an object. This has led some people to believe that Jesus was not actually the object of the disciples' worship, but only the instigator for the disciples' worship of God. Some will twist this truth to object to Jesus' deity and claim that Jesus is not to be worshipped. However, this position ignores the other gospel descriptions of Jesus being worshipped. One encounter of Jesus receiving worship happened earlier in the same chapter (28:9) when the women bowed before Christ, grasped His feet, and προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ (worshipped him). Bible commentator John Nolland further elaborates, "προσκυβεῖν ('do obeisance/worship') always has Jesus as its object in Matthew, and after its use in v. 9 for the women's

¹³ Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 883.

worship of Jesus it must do so here.”¹⁴

The most perplexing reality of Matthew 28:17 is that immediately after the disciples worshipped Jesus it follows with the detail that the disciples ἐδίστασαν, meaning “they doubted.” These two reactions seem like polar opposites and have led to much discussion and speculation. Nolland proposes that the subject of “they doubted” in Greek is οἱ δὲ and can mean one of three things: “(a) all of the eleven disciples; (b) some of the eleven disciples; or (c) some who were other than the eleven disciples.”¹⁵ Nolland concludes that οἱ δὲ “has a good syntactical parallel in Matthew 26:67, where it is used to identify a smaller subgroup of a larger group who have been subjects of the preceding verbs.”¹⁶ Thus, Nolland concludes that (b) is the best option for understanding who doubted.

Other commentators suppose that the crowd on the mountain was larger than only the eleven. Leon Morris believes that the 500 hundred people who had seen the resurrected Jesus, according to 1 Corinthians 15:6, appear at this time.¹⁷ If this is true, then it leaves open the possibility that the doubters were others than the eleven. Perhaps with a crowd that large, it would be difficult to get a good look at the resurrected Jesus. The doubting could be explained as a failure to recognize Jesus;¹⁸ there are other biblical examples of disciples failing to recognize the resurrected Jesus.¹⁹

Other commentators attempt to explain ἐδίστασαν by researching the other

¹⁴ John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2005), 1262.

¹⁵ Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 1262.

¹⁶ Nolland.

¹⁷ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 745.

¹⁸ Davies and Alison, *Matthew*, 546.

¹⁹ Mark 16:11, 13-14; Luke 24:13-35; John 20:14; and 21:4.

times this word is used in Matthew's Gospel. This study leads only to Matthew 14:31, where Jesus rebukes Peter for sinking while walking on water. Jesus asked Peter, "why did you ἐδίστασας." It is important to note that Peter believed enough to walk on water toward Jesus. The "doubt" that Peter practiced is not best described as "unbelief" or "rebellion," but as "hesitation" or "uncertainty."²⁰ France agrees, "It describes Peter's loss of confidence in the face of the elements."²¹ Thus, the ἐδίστασαν the disciples experienced was "hesitancy" or "uncertainty" in the presence of the resurrected Christ. The desertion of the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane could have helped cause the disciples' hesitation. Riddled with shame after their promise of dying faithfulness during The Last Supper, they were uncertain how Jesus would respond to their failure.

Interestingly, just as worship and doubt are closely connected in Matthew 28:17, Peter's doubt was quickly followed with worship from everyone in the boat (Matt 14:33). Nolland explains that it is very likely, at times, that both doubt and faith can "coexist."²² During these difficult times, faith must overcome doubt so that Christ can be worshipped.

The power delegated to Jesus in Matthew 28:18 displays his divinity. The resurrection proves the authority He claimed to have in Matthew 11:27. Furthermore, this realized authority is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy found in Daniel 7:13-14. Due to the power the "Son of Man" receives, as described in Daniel 7:13-14, God's saints can now receive and possess God's kingdom "forever, forever, and ever" (Dan 7:18, 22, 27). Additionally, this newly revealed authority marks the complete fulfillment of the "Suffering Servant" prophecies found scattered throughout the Old Testament.

²⁰ Turner, *Matthew*, 688.

²¹ France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 1111.

²² Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 1263.

The glory Jesus possessed with the Father before the world existed is now being realized (John 17:5). Morris concludes that Jesus now “has supreme authority throughout the universe.”²³

Christ’s universal authority is in complete harmony with all of Scripture and becomes the foundation for the imperative Jesus gives the disciples in the next two verses. First, God exalts Jesus as the name above every other name (Phil 2:9); as a result, Jesus can now commission his disciples to accomplish this insurmountable task (28:19-20). The exaltation of Jesus “provides the encouragement and means of accomplishing the task.”²⁴ According to Manlio Simonetti, obedience to The Great Commission results in Christ’s “reign on earth through the faith of his believers.”²⁵ In essence, Jesus’ authority is passed on to the community of believers as they work to make disciples of all nations.²⁶

Throughout the book of Matthew Jesus focused His efforts on “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt 10:6, 15:24). However, according to David Turner, The Great Commission marks “the end of the exclusive focus on Israel. The Jewish mission now gives way to the world mission.”²⁷ It is important to note that The Great Commission does not end the mission to the Jews. The New Testament church rightly continued their evangelistic efforts among the Jewish people, but The Great Commission now expands the disciple-making task to “all nations.”

The word “therefore” in Matthew 28:19 connects the authority of Jesus to the mission. The imperative portion of The Great Commission is found in verses 19 and 20.

²³ Morris, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 746.

²⁴ Osborne and Arnold, *Matthew*, 1078.

²⁵ Simonetti, *Matthew 14-28*, 313.

²⁶ Turner, *Matthew*, 689.

²⁷ Davies and Alison, *Matthew*, 546-47.

It is important to note that this sentence possesses only one main verb: μαθητεύσατε, meaning “make disciples.” Herein lies the focus of the task.

Jesus’ ministry was a pattern of discipleship. He called individuals to follow Him, and now He is commissioning them to μαθητεύσατε of others. The strategy is that of exponential growth. The command to “make disciples” needs to be contrasted to commands such as “make converts” or “evangelize.” These later commands are absent from the passage and for a good reason. Making converts and evangelizing imply a one-time commitment. Jesus is not interested in followers who commit to follow Him at only one point in their lives. Jesus is interested in making disciples who will spend their lives “reproducing themselves.”²⁸ Turner comments, “A disciple is literally one who follows an itinerant master, as have Jesus’ disciples.”²⁹ Now Jesus is calling his followers to make disciples in a metaphorical sense; Jesus’ disciples can no longer literally follow Him around. The metaphorical sense Jesus expects is defined by the rest of the sentence found in Matthew 28:19-20. The rest of the sentence contains three participles that qualify what is meant by “μαθητεύσατε of all nations.”

First, disciples are to be made by πορευθέντες, “going.” A literal English translation might include “as you go” make disciples. Consequently, disciple-making is something that is done intentionally. Since the object of “make disciples” is “all nations,” this is most often translated into English with the simple imperative “go.”³⁰

Ironside writes,

The exact character of this commission is the truth of our responsibility to carry the story of redeeming love to all men everywhere. It is given, not alone to those we may think of as official ministers or specially designated missionaries, but to every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make Him known to others and so

²⁸ Turner, *Matthew*, 689.

²⁹ Turner.

³⁰ Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 886.

to win as many precious souls as possible while the day of grace is continued. This is the first great business of every member of the church of the living God.³¹

This simple participle, πορευθέντες, carries such weight that disciples of Jesus need to work intentionally to make disciples locally and all over the world. Jesus' disciples cannot be satisfied until the whole world is full of Christ's followers.

The second participle to qualify μαθητεύσατε is the word βαπτίζοντες, "baptizing." This command is somewhat surprising because Matthew has not mentioned baptism since chapter 3. The baptism of Jesus, found in Matthew 3, is what gives this great commission command its legitimacy. Disciples are to be baptized because "undergoing baptism is part of the imitation of Christ."³² Grant R. Osborne and Clinton E. Arnold label baptism as "the primary sacrament of initiation into the Christian faith."³³ R. C. Sproul communicates the significance of baptism:

Baptism communicates that we have been united to Jesus Christ. It shows that we have been cleansed from sin, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and buried and raised again with Jesus Christ, just to mention few of its significations. God promises that all who have faith in His Son, Jesus Christ, will participate in all of the promise, all of the benefits, that Christ has secured. Baptism is not a sign of one's faith; it is a sign of the faithfulness of God to give all of His Son to all who believe.³⁴

A disciple of Jesus will yield one's self to the waters of baptism to follow the example and unite one's self with Jesus Christ.

The Trinitarian formula applied to baptism affirms Jesus' divinity. Disciples are to be baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Additionally, the Holy Spirit's divinity is well established in this passage. The terminology used in this passage is explicit teaching on the oneness of the Father, Son,

³¹ Ironside, *Matthew*, 258.

³² Davies and Alison, *Matthew*, 547.

³³ Osborne and Arnold, *Matthew*, 1080.

³⁴ R. C. Sproul, *Matthew, St. Andrew's Expository Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 826.

and Holy Spirit.³⁵ The equality between the three is reiterated in the fact that Jesus instructed His disciples to be baptized in the “name” of the three. The Greek is unmistakably singular. Three “names” are mentioned, but the unity of the three is strong enough that the three are mentioned as a singular “name.”

The reference of the Trinity should remind Christ’s disciples of Jesus’ own baptism; the Father spoke from heaven, the Son was baptized, and the Holy Spirit descended as a dove. Ironside explains the significance of the Trinitarian formula as necessary because all three are involved in the salvation process. Ironside states, “Each person of the Godhead had and still has a part in the work of salvation. Therefore all are recognized and confessed in Christian baptism. The Father sent the Son, who gave His life in the power of the Eternal Spirit.”³⁶

The third participle to qualify the meaning of μαθητεύσατε is the word διδάσκοντες, “teaching.” The curriculum is the commands of the Lord Jesus. The διδάσκοντες is less about knowledge of facts and more about “a way of life.”³⁷ Turner explains, “Righteous behavior is the mark of Jesus’ disciples.”³⁸ How much of Jesus’ commandments should be taught? The passage is explicitly clear; they are to teach “*all* that I have commanded you” (emphasis added). This includes Jesus’ imperatives, proverbs, blessings, parables, and prophecies. To understand and apply these different genres will require study, wisdom, effort and time.

Jesus performed the role of teacher. The Gospel of Matthew describes Jesus as teaching his disciples in eight different passages.³⁹ Now the baton is being handed off to

³⁵ Morris, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 748.

³⁶ Ironside, *Matthew*, 257.

³⁷ Morris, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 749.

³⁸ Turner, *Matthew*, 690.

³⁹ Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 888.

those He taught. Jesus' disciples are becoming an extension of His ministry as they teach obedience to His commandments. Donald Alfred Hagner states that this passage "makes clear that the commission is not only for the original eleven disciples but also for their disciples and their disciples' disciples in perpetuity until Jesus returns."⁴⁰

Lastly, the διδάσκοντες command brings balance to the evangelistic emphasis found in The Great Commission. Not only are disciples to focus on outreach and evangelism, they are to deepen present believers through discipleship. There is room for growth with every human in the world. Unbelievers can begin infancy in Christ through salvation and can mature through learning and applying further commands of Jesus. These two ends of the spectrum encompass all that it means to "make disciples."

The Great Commission ends with an empowering and comforting promise from Christ. The promise begins with a phrase frequently found throughout Matthew—καὶ ἰδοὺ. According to Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, these phrases in Scripture are "prompters of attention, which serve also to emphasize [their] following statement."⁴¹ This is the last of six uses of these prompters in the book of Matthew. Osborne and Arnold state that this prompter "points to the dramatic truth that provides a proper conclusion to this commission and to the gospel as a whole."⁴² What truth is this prompter emphasizing? It is emphasizing the truth that the One who has all authority in heaven and on earth is present with His disciples as they work to fulfill The Great Commission all over the globe.

The promise of an infant becoming "Immanuel," stated in the first chapter of Matthew, is being fulfilled in the last sentence of this Gospel. The promise of Jesus'

⁴⁰ Turner, *Matthew*, 691.

⁴¹ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 811.

⁴² Osborne and Arnold, *Matthew*, 1082.

divine presence equates to a promise of “divine assistance.”⁴³ Jesus may be physically absent, but according to Turner, He is present with all His disciples “through the same Spirit that empowered Jesus while he was on earth.”⁴⁴ The implication of this promise is that Jesus will provide divine assistance at every location on the globe where His disciples are working to reproduce disciples. This divine presence can overcome every weakness found in mankind. Jesus’ disciples had repeatedly failed while Jesus walked the earth, but now they are empowered in a way they previously were not.

This divine promise will not expire till “the end of the age.” As long as it is “the church age” believers can count on Jesus’ presence. Ironside states that the end of this age will occur when Jesus “appears in glory to set up His kingdom over all the earth.”⁴⁵ Ironside continues, the Parousia will mark the beginning of “The Kingdom Age”⁴⁶ and the end of the need to make disciples of all nations. Ironside concludes that until then, “It is our responsibility to carry the message of grace to all men everywhere while we wait for our Lord to return, according to His promise.”⁴⁷

The Supernatural Enablement

God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and tasked them to be an example of obedience to all the nations of the world. As they walked in obedience to the commandments of God, they would be blessed, and this blessing should motivate other nations to walk in obedience to the commandments of God (Isa 43:10-12). Israel failed to walk in obedience and therefore, failed to be an example of blessing to the nations. Israel failed because they were unwilling to walk faithfully in obedience, but now

⁴³ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 548.

⁴⁴ Turner, *Matthew*, 690.

⁴⁵ Ironside, *Matthew*, 257.

⁴⁶ Ironside.

⁴⁷ Ironside.

Christ's followers have been empowered to walk in obedience.

The task of The Great Commission is insurmountable and overwhelming for any follower of Jesus. If disciples had to rely upon their strength and discernment to complete this task, the effort would be short-lived. However, God not only assigns this gargantuan task, He supernaturally empowers His disciples to dedicate their lives to this very task.

The resurrection of Jesus was a monumental occasion for the nation of Israel. According to David Peterson, the resurrection of Christ revived “the hope for the redemption of Israel but does not [yet] fulfill it.”⁴⁸ Leaving Israel's redemption unfulfilled naturally raises questions for Christ's followers. The first of these questions is posed in Acts 1:6: “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” Jesus does not address this question, but rather instructs His disciples not to worry about “times or seasons.” Instead, they are to give their attention to the immediate task at hand. This immediate task, given in Acts 1:8, is to be Holy Spirit empowered witnesses to the world.

Exposition of Acts 1:8

Acts 1:8 is thought by biblical scholars to be the theme verse for the entire book.⁴⁹ Everything that happens after this verse is an example of how Jesus' disciples are Holy Spirit empowered witnesses throughout the world. Furthermore, Acts 1:8 echoes and explains The Great Commission passage given by Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20.

The verse begins with the conjunction ἀλλά. This conjunction is meant to display contrast and is here translated as “but.” The contrast Jesus is making is with the thoughts and plans of the disciples themselves. Jesus is displaying his refusal to

⁴⁸ David Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2009), 108.

⁴⁹ F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), 36-37.

comment on the “times and seasons” question asked in Acts 1:6. Instead, He is establishing the proper priorities of His disciples. Unbeknownst to the disciples themselves, Jesus is about to tell them that “they are prepared to undertake the task of worldwide mission.”⁵⁰

There are three main emphases found in this verse. First, Jesus expects His disciples to be *witnesses*. Second, Jesus expects His disciples to be *supernaturally empowered*. Third, Jesus expects His disciples’ influence to be found “in *Jerusalem* and in all *Judea* and *Samaria*, and to *the end of the earth*” (emphasis added).

Witnesses. Jesus’ disciples were to be μάρτυρες. According to Darrell L. Bock, a “witness” is someone “who helps establish facts objectively through verifiable observation.”⁵¹ Acts 1:21-22 states that these initial witnesses were required to be direct observers of Jesus’ entire earthly ministry. Peterson says that Jesus’ disciples were to witness specifically in two ways.⁵² First, they were to testify of Jesus’ resurrection power because they had literally observed Him in person. Second, they would testify by displaying the transformation power they experienced by trusting in the risen Lord. The book of Acts displays these two different forms of witnesses. The disciples proclaimed that they had witnessed the resurrection, and the resurrection transformed them from intimidated, fearful men into courageous, bold, and fearless men who would testify despite any consequences.

Lastly, Jesus makes his disciples a promise. He promises that His disciples “will be my witnesses.” Whereas Israel had failed to be the witness they were intended to be, Jesus disciples will not fail. These disciples will fulfill the promise of Isaiah 43:10.

⁵⁰ Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts*, Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 28.

⁵¹ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 64.

⁵² Peterson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 112.

The reason they will not fail this time is that they would be supernaturally empowered.

Supernaturally empowered. Eckhard J. Schnabel states that the Old Testament characterizes the power of God’s Spirit in four ways: (1) “God’s power in the creation of the world;” (2) “God’s power that sustains all life;” (3) “God’s invisible activity in Israel;” and (4) “God’s presence in various types of revelation, charismatic wisdom, and invasive speech.”⁵³ The prophet Isaiah foretold the gift of the Holy Spirit in Isaiah 32:15. Jesus promised the gift of the Holy Spirit in John 15:26-27 and Luke 24:49. As the disciples would soon discover, they would receive the very same Spirit that empowered Jesus to “proclaim good news to the poor, . . . proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, [and] to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Isa 4:18-19).

Consequently, the power they would receive is the power of *enablement*. This enablement is not to be used to gain political power, but to set people free spiritually. F. F. Bruce says it is by this power that “their mighty works were accomplished and their preaching made effective.”⁵⁴ Bock explains, “The Spirit will give them the capability to articulate their experience with boldness.”⁵⁵ The promise of this power and of the Holy Spirit is first fulfilled in Acts 2 as the Holy Spirit descends upon the disciples when “divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each of them” (Acts 2:3). The result of this encounter was a bold, miraculous proclamation of the gospel that led 3,000 souls to repentance and baptism.⁵⁶ The reader can find similar displays of boldness and the miraculous throughout the book of Acts.

⁵³ Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 77.

⁵⁴ Bruce, *Book of the Acts*, 36.

⁵⁵ Bock, *Acts*, 64. Acts 4:33 and 6:8-10 are examples of this supernatural boldness.

⁵⁶ It is true that the power of the Holy Spirit enables the miraculous, but the purpose of miracles is always to lend credence to the Gospel message (John 10:38).

Furthermore, Paul describes this power as the enablement to be controlled by God's love (2 Cor 5:14). The greatest commandment in the Bible is to love God with all that one is (Matt 22:37-38), and the second greatest is to love one's neighbor as one loves self (Matt 22:39). Now the Christian can fulfill these commandments through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle John explains this newfound enablement: "If we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us" (1 John 4:12). By the Holy Spirit, the Christian can love as he or she is commanded.

As seen in Acts 1:8, the qualifying prerequisite to receiving power is that of having "the Holy Spirit come on you." Without the Holy Spirit, no one will receive power. Thus, the first enablement of power is equated with the *baptism of the Holy Spirit*, mentioned only three verses before Acts 1:8 (emphasis added). Baptism of the Holy Spirit is an act seen as definitive and not continuous. In other words, it is a one-time event. Bible commentator David Peterson explains the syntax found in Acts 1:8: "The context so delimits the aorist participle *epelthontos* to show that the meaning is temporal and punctiliar."⁵⁷ This truth conveys that every Christian possess all the power he or she needs to be the witness God requires. When Christians yield themselves to the Spirit, they are accessing the power they already possess.

Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the end of the earth. God had always intended to bring salvation to the end of the earth (Isa 49:6). He has already explained how His disciples are to be Holy Spirit empowered witnesses, but now He gives His disciples a roadmap so that they can accomplish their task. Disciple-making always begins at the local level. Ironside said it best: "No one is fit to be a missionary abroad who is not a missionary at home."⁵⁸ Christ's disciples are to be intentional in their efforts

⁵⁷ Peterson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 110.

⁵⁸ Ironside, *Matthew*, 259.

to make disciples on the local level. Only then, are disciples prepared to extend their realm of influence to their surrounding areas and ultimately to the end of the earth.

The point of this phrase is that Jesus' goal in disciple-making is that of world mission. Jesus tasked His disciples with the "expansion of the gospel into the Gentile world."⁵⁹ This task does not exclude the Jews from the Gospel invitation, but it opens the invitation to every human ever born. It is possible that the disciples understood this phrase to mean that the gospel needed to be shared only to Jews scattered throughout the world, but in time God makes it clear that the invitation is to be offered to all peoples.⁶⁰ A further examination of the book of Acts makes this point explicitly clear. Bruce explains that the effort to witness in Jerusalem is displayed in the first 7 chapters of Acts. Chapters 8 through 11 display the disciples' effort to witness in Judea and Samaria. Chapters 12 through 28 display their effort to witness to the end of the earth.⁶¹ Bock concludes, "The plan did not emerge as one gradually developed by the church but as one gradually revealed and extended by God."⁶²

There is much disagreement on the meaning of the phrase "καὶ ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς" translated "and to the end of the earth." Martin Culy and Mikeal Parsons are quick to point out that many English versions of the Bible translate this phrase by making the word ἐσχάτου plural rendering it "and to the *ends* of the earth"⁶³ (emphasis added). The Greek lists the word in the singular form. Culy and Parsons also point out that some justify the plural use in English by labeling it as an English idiom that means precisely

⁵⁹ Bock, *Acts*, 65.

⁶⁰ Bock, *Acts*, 66.

⁶¹ Bruce, *Book of the Acts*, 36-37.

⁶² Bock, *Acts*, 67.

⁶³ Martin M. Culy and Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, 1st ed. Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2003), 9.

the same as when the singular form is used in the Greek.⁶⁴ However, Culy and Parsons, along with other commentators, conclude that Jesus may have had a specific place in mind since He used the singular instead of the plural. The place Jesus might have had in mind, as revealed by Luke throughout the book of Acts, is that of Rome or perhaps Spain.⁶⁵ On the other hand, Schnabel disagrees that the “end” Jesus had in mind was Rome, Spain, or any other single location. The end Jesus had in mind was “the farthest reaches of the inhabited world known at the time.”⁶⁶ Bruce concludes his position somewhere in the middle of these two spectrums. He admits that the singular use might have had Rome in mind, “but the sense of the phrase need not be so limited in the present context.”⁶⁷

According to Bock, the best understanding of this debated phrase is interpreted twofold—geographically and ethnically.⁶⁸ Disciples are to expand the Gospel geographically, but they should also expand the Gospel ethnically. This means that they are intended to take the Gospel to people groups who might be close geographically, but because of language and cultural barriers, they are far from understanding the Gospel. Peterson rightly labels this view as “theopolitical.”⁶⁹ He explains that the theopolitical view envelops three elements. First, is “the dawn of salvation in Jerusalem.” Second, is “the reconstitution and reunification of Israel (signified here by *in all Judea and Samaria*)” (emphasis original). Third, is “the inclusion of the Gentiles within the people of God.”⁷⁰ The Bible gives plenty of examples of how individuals witnessed through

⁶⁴ Culy and Parsons, *Acts*, 9.

⁶⁵ Culy and Parsons.

⁶⁶ Schnabel, *Acts*, 79.

⁶⁷ Bruce, *Book of the Acts*, 37.

⁶⁸ Bock, *Acts*, 65.

⁶⁹ Peterson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 112.

⁷⁰ Peterson, 112-13.

Holy Spirit empowerment.

First Practical Example of Disciple-Making

A clear imperative and supernatural enablement are essential to the task of making disciples, but a practical example can be priceless in determining how to put theology into practice. Jesus gives a valuable example in John 4:7-26. The Great Commission and Acts 1:8 make it clear to preach the Gospel to people from all kinds of ethnic backgrounds. In this story, Jesus is the first to reach outside the Jewish ethnicity to witness to an ethnic group who were considered bitter rivals of the Jewish people—the Samaritans. Leon Morris upholds this story as such an example: “Jesus came to bring salvation for people of all races, and this incident strikingly brings out this truth.”⁷¹

This story is more than an example of the outreach of the Gospel. Gerald L. Borchert claims that this example “offers a wonderful paradigm for considering the nature and strategy of evangelistic outreach.”⁷² For example, this story displays the importance of personal evangelism. Many Christians are convinced that mass crusades are the best way to make disciples. Certainly there is a place for the preaching of the Gospel to large crowds, but even Billy Graham admits that mass crusades are incapable of fulfilling The Great Commission: “Mass crusades, in which I believe and to which I have committed my life, will never finish The Great Commission; but a one-by-one ministry will.”⁷³ This story displays the importance of each Christian’s need to share the Gospel with persons they encounter.

Lastly, this passage displays a practical method for sharing the Gospel. Ray

⁷¹ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 225.

⁷² Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11*, The New American Commentary, vol. 25a (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 197.

⁷³ Billy Graham, *The Holy Spirit: Activating God's Power in Your Life* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1978), 147.

Comfort identifies this method as the “RCCR method of evangelism.”⁷⁴ RCCR is an initialism meaning “relate, create, convict, and reveal.”⁷⁵ An exposition of John 4:7-26 will highlight Jesus’ use of this method in witnessing to the Samaritan woman.

Exposition of John 4:7-26

The chapter begins with some valuable context. Jesus and His disciples are traveling from Judea to Galilee, about a three-day journey.⁷⁶ During their journey Jesus is left alone at a well while his disciples enter the village to purchase supplies. While resting, a Samaritan woman comes to draw water in the middle of the day.

To share the Gospel with this woman, Jesus must overcome specific barriers. The first barrier Jesus needed to cross was the “gender” barrier. The Jewish culture provided a clear prohibition for men to speak with women in public.⁷⁷ The second barrier is known as the “cultural” barrier. The divisions ran deep that separated the Jews from the Samaritans. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, Samaritans were “apostates of the Jewish nation.”⁷⁸ As displayed later in this story, most of their differences dwelt with the disagreement on the location of the rightful place for the worship of God. Consequently, the Jews destroyed the Samaritan’s place of worship atop Mount Gerizim. In retaliation, the “Samaritans defiled the temple grounds in Jerusalem just before Passover by littering them with bones.”⁷⁹ Due to the animosity between the two

⁷⁴ Kirk Cameron and Ray Comfort, *The School of Biblical Evangelism: 101 Lessons: How to Share Your Faith Simply, Effectively, Biblically . . . the Way Jesus Did* (Gainesville, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2004), 117.

⁷⁵ Cameron and Comfort, *The School of Biblical Evangelism*.

⁷⁶ Borchert, *John*, 199.

⁷⁷ Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 596.

⁷⁸ Marianne Meye Thompson, *John: A Commentary*. The New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 98.

⁷⁹ Thompson, *John*, 99.

ethnicities, Jews were forbidden even to use the same eating utensils as Samaritans,⁸⁰ a man-made custom Jesus intended to defy by asking her for a drink of water when He had no utensil of His own to drink from.

Jesus crossed a third obstacle—the “moral” barrier. Most Bible commentators agree that this woman was likely a social outcast. She has had five previous marriages and is now living with a man who is not her husband (John 4:18). Additionally, she had gone to the well to draw water in the heat of the day all alone, when it was customary to complete that chore with other women during the cooler hours of the day. Commentator Craig S. Keener concludes that this is a “woman with a reputation for sexual impurity [and] would not be welcome among women who upheld the stricter Mediterranean values for women’s chastity.”⁸¹ Lastly, Jesus overcame some personal boundaries as He took time to talk with the woman even though He was tired, thirsty, hungry, and hot.

Relate. Despite all of these barriers Jesus *related* to this woman with a simple request: “give me a drink” (John 4:7). He was unashamed to speak with her in the middle of the day. This simple act resonated with her and from here, He proceeds to take the conversation in a spiritual direction, but it began in the natural realm. If Jesus began the conversation by talking about spiritual truths, the conversation could have gone very differently. Also, Jesus’ authenticity is notable. This question was not simply a device Jesus used to talk about spiritual things; He truly was thirsty. Likewise, Christians who wish to share the hope of Jesus on a personal level should begin by talking with individuals without inundating them with spiritual truths. The rapport does not necessarily need to take weeks or months to build, but often the lost become defensive

⁸⁰ William E. Hull, *Luke – John*, in vol. 9 of *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, ed. Clifton J. Allen (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1970), 251.

⁸¹ Keener, *Gospel of John*, 595.

when they are confronted with spiritual truths when no effort was made to build trust through a relationship.

Create. First, Jesus related to the woman through a request; and secondly, he *created* an opportunity to talk about spiritual matters (4:10). Jesus swings the conversation into the spiritual realm by drawing “a divine contrast”⁸² between physical water and spiritual water. Perhaps Jesus is utilizing this divine contrast to test the spiritual depth of her understanding. If she comprehends that Jesus is talking of the spiritual, then one could conclude she has an understanding of spiritual truths. Jesus speaks of water that springs up inside a person and quenches one’s thirst for eternity.

It is interesting to note that the word John uses to describe Jacob’s well is not the usual Greek word for “well.” The word used by John in 4:6 and quoted by Jesus in 4:14 is the word *πηγή*. According to Morris, this word signifies a spring or fountain as opposed to only a well.⁸³ One Bible commentator contrasts the difference: “A spring is a God-given thing. God creates the spring; man only digs the well.”⁸⁴ Consequently, Jesus is developing in her a curiosity by contrasting the spiritual with the physical. However, like most worldly people, she initially interprets the living water Jesus offers as literal instead of spiritual. R. V. G. Tasker concludes that “the welfare of her soul is not for her a matter of primary concern.”⁸⁵ Her focus on the physical, instead of the spiritual, has revealed the need to take the conversation deeper.

⁸² Hull, *Luke – John*, 251.

⁸³ Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 228.

⁸⁴ Morris, 227

⁸⁵ R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction and Commentary*, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 4 (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1999), 75.

Convict. Jesus essentially points this woman to one of the Ten Commandments to bring conviction into her life. After dodging the instruction to “go, call your husband, and come here” (John 4:16), Jesus points out that this woman has been married five times and is now living with a man who is not her husband. Keener concludes that it is evident that this woman “is embarrassed to talk about a shameful past.”⁸⁶ William E. Hull states that this woman’s “domestic life was in shambles” and that Jesus utilized this topic to “prompt a confession of sin.”⁸⁷

Seeking to escape the attention of her shameful past, she attempts to turn the dialogue towards a tangent issue—the right location of worship. Jesus was prepared for her reaction and those who wish to make disciples must also be prepared. According to Hull, Jesus does not dwell on the age-old argument because then “the woman would not have had to face herself and her sin.”⁸⁸ Jesus “turned the conversation away from the place of worship to the nature of worship.”⁸⁹ The reason Jesus maintains this focus is to bring *conviction* into this woman’s life. Hull says, “To make it possible for the woman to receive the living water Jesus spoke about, it would be necessary for her to deal with the tragic nature of her sinful life.”⁹⁰ These conversations are difficult but essential for disciple-making.

The disciple-makers should take note that Jesus utilized the Ten Commandments to bring necessary conviction. The Ten Commandments are an effective tool to bring conviction into the lives of the lost. Whenever someone comes under conviction, they attempt to escape the attention of the Ten Commandments, but the

⁸⁶ Keener, *Gospel of John*, 605.

⁸⁷ Hull, *Luke – John*, 253.

⁸⁸ Hull, 207.

⁸⁹ Hull.

⁹⁰ Hull, 205.

disciple-maker can maintain conviction by keeping attention on the Ten Commandments. As the disciple-maker brings the necessary conviction into the lives of the lost, it will naturally lead to the need to *reveal* the only remedy for a convicted heart.

Reveal. The bulk of a witnessing conversation is in relating, creating, and convicting the lost. Revealing the remedy to a guilty conscience is simple and pointed. Jesus *reveals* the remedy in John 4:26 in only five Greek words: “ἐγὼ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι.” The most relevant words in this sentence are ἐγὼ εἰμι (I am). This simple phrase is reminiscent of God’s revealed name in Exodus 3:14. Morris points out that there is no object to the simple Greek phrase and that an English translation could essentially be rendered, “I that speak to you, I am.”⁹¹ There are other ἐγὼ εἰμι uses throughout John’s Gospel, but this is only one of two uses in John’s Gospel that stands alone.⁹² Most other uses contain an object.⁹³ This pointed revelation is the first time Jesus publicly claimed to be the Messiah. It carries such significance that Hull describes it “as a revelatory formula announcing the presence of the eternal God in the midst of history.”⁹⁴

This example is invaluable as Christians attempt to “make disciples of all nations.” The example Jesus gives is never to fear crossing man-made barriers for the sake of the Gospel. He utilizes a simple RCCR method to reach this Samaritan woman, who in turn sparks a revival that reaches much of the town. The entire purpose for having a method is for the sake of being intentional in disciple-making. Jesus displayed intentionality and His followers should also. The second example will demonstrate the need for intentionality during some of life’s most difficult moments.

⁹¹ Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 241.

⁹² John 8:58 is the other stand alone “I am” reference.

⁹³ I am: “the bread of life”; “the light of the world”; “the door of the sheep”; “the good shepherd”; and “the resurrection and life.”

⁹⁴ Hull, *Luke – John*, 254.

Second Practical Example of Disciple-Making

Just as Matthew 5:16 tells Christ's followers to "let your light shine before others," there is no better opportunity to shine brightly than when a Christian encounters tribulation. Satan hates Christ's church (1 Pet 5:8), and as the following example displays, he longs to attack precisely when it seems as though Christ's kingdom is advancing. An exposition of Acts 16:19-34 will teach Christ's disciples to *persevere* through *tribulation* so that *disciples are made*.

Exposition of Acts 16:19-34

Earlier in Acts 16 Paul and his companions concluded that God was calling them to preach the Gospel in the region known as Macedonia. Upon arriving in the area, Paul is quick to make a convert named Lydia who offers Paul and his companions lodging. While traveling to the place of prayer, Paul repeatedly encounters an annoying slave girl who had a spirit of divination. After casting the demon out of her, one might think that this would be a cause for rejoicing, but the resulting exorcism affected the slave owner's profits from the girl's fortune-telling. The consequences of this miracle led to a series of tribulations for Paul and Silas.

Tribulations. Worldly priorities are a root cause for the persecution of Jesus' disciples. Acts 16:19 displays this misplaced priority. Instead of rejoicing that a girl is set free from demonic influence, the love of money motivates the slave-owners to wrongly arrest Paul and Silas and drag them in front of the local magistrates.

In 16:20 Paul and Silas are falsely accused. Instead of reporting the loss of income, the slave owners accuse the missionaries of "weightier political charges."⁹⁵ According to I. Howard Marshall, the first false accusation made is that Paul and Silas

⁹⁵ Parsons, *Acts*, 232.

were guilty of “causing a public disturbance.”⁹⁶ The Greek verb used by these accusers is ἐκταράσσουσιν. This verb conveys the meaning “to stir up against, to start a riot, to cause an uproar.”⁹⁷ This charge is a serious charge and requires a hefty punishment since the magistrates’ main priority “was to maintain order.”⁹⁸ Additionally, Marshall points out that this accusation “was backed up by a comment that they were Jews, so as to take account of the anti-Jewish feeling which was not uncommon at the time.”⁹⁹ Ironically, the ones truly guilty of disturbing the peace are the slave-owners who utilized their influence and anti-Semitism to stir up a mob to join them in persecuting the disciples. Paul and Silas were the ones promoting peace.

Marshall states that the slave-owners make a second accusation that Paul and Silas “were advocating non-Roman customs.”¹⁰⁰ The people of Philippi were proud to be Romans. This location was the site of key Roman battles in history. According to Schnabel, “Public teaching about a Jewish Savior and a public exorcism performed by invoking the Messiah of the Jewish people could easily be construed as undermining the Roman identity and the civic distinctiveness.”¹⁰¹ However, Marshall notes that this “principle was clearly a flexible one which could be invoked as necessary.”¹⁰² Furthermore, the Jews were legally allowed to proselytize the Romans.¹⁰³

The tribulations continued mounting for Paul and Silas as a mob joined in the

⁹⁶ I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Leicester, England: Inter Varsity Press, 1998), 270.

⁹⁷ Louw and Nida, *Greek-English*, 498.

⁹⁸ Schnabel, *Acts*, 685.

⁹⁹ Marshall, *Acts of the Apostles*, 270.

¹⁰⁰ Marshall, *Acts of the Apostles*, 270.

¹⁰¹ Schnabel, *Acts*, 686.

¹⁰² Marshall, *Acts of the Apostles*, 270.

¹⁰³ Marshall.

verbal attack. There is no doubt that this mob influenced the magistrates' decision to have them stripped and beaten.¹⁰⁴ They were denied due process and illegally beaten. Roman citizens, such as Paul and Silas, were legally protected from these brutal methods. The mistreatment was not a result of justice, but an attempt to appease an anti-Semitic mob.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, the authorities wrongly imprisoned Paul and Silas and mistreated them by locking them in the inner cell and having their feet fastened in stocks.

Perseverance. Unable to sleep due to their mistreatment, Paul and Silas refuse to wallow in self-pity. Around midnight, they were heard praying and singing hymns to God. Schnabel states that imperfect tense of the verb ὕμνουσιν implies that they had been singing hymns over a period of time.¹⁰⁶ Like their Lord, they resolved to entrust themselves to the One who judges justly (1 Pet 2:23). Peterson comments, “Paul in captivity takes the opportunity to testify to the character of God in the presence of unbelievers and to demonstrate before them his own confidence in the God he proclaimed.”¹⁰⁷ No speculation is needed to come to this conclusion. Paul tells everyone his motives while in prison in Philippians 1:12-14. The early church father, Tertullian, speaks of the perseverance of Paul and Silas while suffering in prison: “The legs feel nothing in the stocks when the heart is in heaven.”¹⁰⁸ This act of faithfulness is about to have a profound impact in all the prison, even on those outside.

A direct result of perseverance is reward. God rewards the faithful (2 Chr 16:9). In this case, He rewards Paul and Silas through the natural phenomenon of an

¹⁰⁴ Peterson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 466.

¹⁰⁵ Peterson, 467.

¹⁰⁶ Schnabel, *Acts*, 689.

¹⁰⁷ Peterson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 468.

¹⁰⁸ Bock, *Acts*, 540.

earthquake. Earthquakes were common in this region and were often interpreted as the work of a god.¹⁰⁹ The timing and result of this earthquake communicate to all in the prison that this was a work of Paul's God. The quake wrenched every door in the prison, and every prisoner's bonds were also wrenched from the walls. Marshall concludes that this result is an authoritative declaration that "no matter how securely men bind them, God can set them free."¹¹⁰ However, this act of God was not meant to set men free from a physical prison. In this encounter, Paul displays his commitment to civic order, value for all human life, and priority on the communication of the Gospel.

Disciples made. Paul and Silas have displayed unwavering faith in God in the midst of grave tribulation. Those without this kind of faith have great difficulty in similar distress. The head jailer awakes from the earthquake and quickly surveys the situation. To his chagrin, he discovers that all the prisons doors are no longer secure. Assuming that some prisoners have escaped, the jailer decides to end his life quickly rather than face the authorities who in turn would execute him for his failure to keep the prisoners secure. In the midst of this dire circumstance, "Paul cried with a loud voice, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here'" (Acts 16:28).

This jailer will become Christ's newest disciple because of Paul's compassion to "cry out" to someone who did not deserve compassion. This very jailer played a part in mistreating Paul and Silas. He had made their lives very difficult; however, Paul took literally Jesus' command to "love your enemies" (Matt 5:44). This compassion and steadfast faithfulness in the midst of tribulation leads the jailer to inquire about this unusual faith. The jailer has recognized God's workings. This is a needed reminder that some are watching to see if Christians are different from the rest of the world.

¹⁰⁹ Peterson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 468.

¹¹⁰ Marshall, *Acts of the Apostles*, 271.

This inquiry results in the communication of the Gospel and the salvation of the jailer. Naturally, the jailer wants his loved ones to experience this salvation, so he takes Paul and Silas to his house in the middle of the night to testify to his family. As a result, his household also becomes believers, and they each are baptized that very night. The impact of one salvation is far-reaching. This passage emphasized the term “household”; it is mentioned four times in only four verses. Christians never know how far the conversion of one person will reach.

Repentance was evidence of the jailer’s salvation. That night he washes Paul and Silas’ wounds and feeds them a meal at his house. He no longer fears their escape. The result of this entire encounter is summed up in 16:34. The jailer “rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.” The result of Paul and Silas’ tribulations was joy, and disciples were made. Tribulations played a pivotal role in accomplishing this feat. Paul and Silas would have considered their trials well worth their time and energy. May this example motivate all Christians to persevere through tribulations so that they may be the gospel light this lost world needs to see.

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR
DEVELOPING DISCIPLE-MAKERS

Disciple-makers follow Christ by developing certain biblical convictions. The number of specific convictions can be exhaustive, but at the heart of every mature disciple-maker are the following four convictions: a commitment to the Bible; an ardent prayer life; a dedication to Christ's church; and a conviction to witness to others of the life-changing impact of Jesus Christ.¹ These convictions are displayed in "The Disciple-Maker Wheel" in figure 1.²

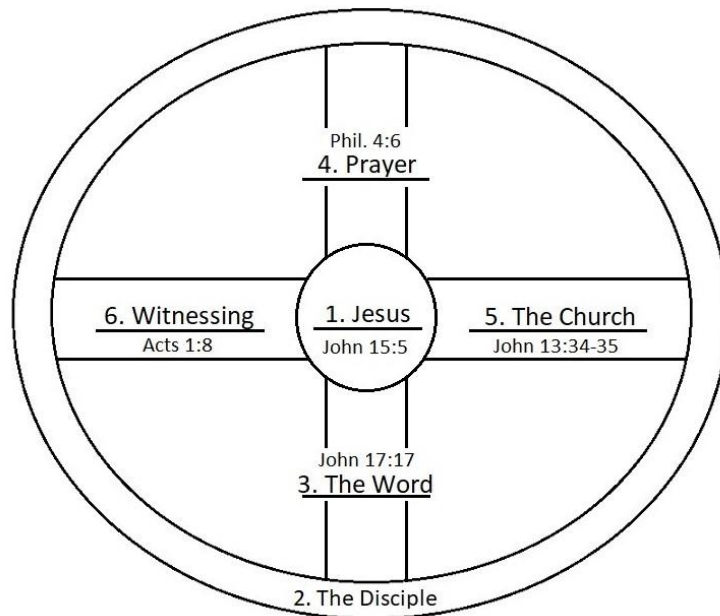


Figure 1. The disciple-maker wheel

¹ This list is adapted from Dawson Trotman's "Wheel Diagram." Betty Lee Skinner, *Daws: A Man Who Trusted God* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1993), 80.

² Used by permission. See appendix 5.

There are six parts to the wheel. At the center of the wheel is the hub. The hub is the foundation of the wheel; and thus, Jesus is rightly described as the hub of a disciple-maker. Everything disciples do depends on Jesus. The second part is the outer wheel, represented as the disciple-maker. The disciple-maker is where the rubber meets the road. The disciple-maker must stay connected to Jesus in order to make any progress in his or her Christian life. If a wheel is disconnected from the hub, it will be useless. The outer wheel utilizes “spokes” to be connected to the hub so that it can gain traction and make progress. The “spokes” that connect the disciple-maker to Jesus are the four convictions previously mentioned: the Bible; prayer; the church; and witnessing. These four convictions will make up the whole of this chapter.

The Bible

The Bible is the first of the four spokes that keep all other spokes in alignment. The inability to rightly apply God’s Word misaligns the other spokes and is detrimental to the wheel. Donald Whitney concludes, “No Spiritual Discipline is more important than the intake of God’s Word.”³ Whitney elaborates:

In the Bible, God tells us about Himself, and especially about Jesus Christ, the incarnation of God. The Bible unfolds the Law of God to us and shows us how we’ve all broken it. There we learn how Christ died as a sinless, willing Substitute for breakers of God’s Law and how we must repent and believe in Him to be right with God. In the Bible, we learn the ways and will of the Lord. We find in Scripture how to live in a way that is pleasing to God as well as best and most fulfilling for ourselves. None of this eternally essential information can be found anywhere else except the Bible. Therefore if we would know God and be Godly, we must know the Word of God—intimately.⁴

The goal is simple; hide the living Word of God in the heart to keep from sinning against God (Ps 119:105). The following “hand” illustration, displayed in figure 2, helps

³ Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991), 28.

⁴ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*.

accomplish this task.⁵ To firmly grasp God’s Word, the disciple must hear, read, study, memorize, and meditate upon Scripture.

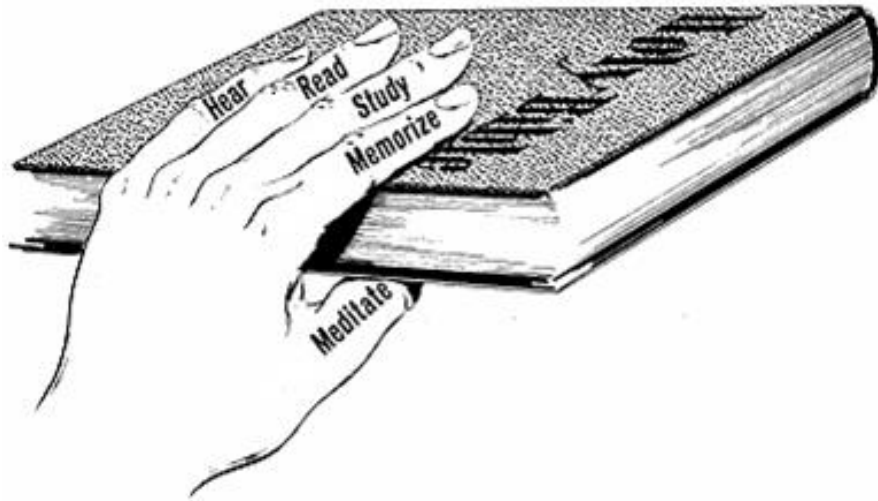


Figure 2. The hand illustration

Hear

Multiple Bible verses command the disciple to “hear” Scripture. Luke 11:28, Romans 10:17, and 1 Timothy 4:13 are a few of the verses that emphasize the hearing of Scripture. The most commonplace to hear Scripture read and exegeted is in the local Bible-believing church. Additionally audio versions of Scripture are now plentiful.

Jeremiah Burroughs, an English Puritan, wrote about the transforming impact the “hearing” of Scripture performed in his community back in 1648:

First, when you come to hear the Word, if you would sanctify God’s name, you must possess your souls with what it is you are going to hear. That is, what you are going to hear is the Word of God. . . . Therefore you find that the apostle, writing to the Thessalonians, gives them the reason why the Word did them so much good as it did; it was because they did hear it as the Word of God. “And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God which you heard from

⁵ Emery Nester, “The Hand Illustration—First Finger: Hearing,” Bible.org (October 2006): 22, <https://bible.org/seriespage/22-hand-illustration-first-finger-hearing>.

us, you accepted it not as the word of man but as what it really is, the word of God” (1 Thessalonians 2:13).⁶

Never before are the most reliable, life-changing teachings on Scripture so readily available than in the current internet-era.

Read

The hearing of Scripture makes the disciple dependent on someone else—the one who is speaking the Scripture. However, reading the Scripture is an independent task performed at any moment of the day; all that is necessary is a copy of the Bible. Paul said it best in 2 Timothy 3:16. If the Scriptures are “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,” then believers should know what they say. *Christianity Today* and the Gallup Poll conclude that “no factor is more influential in shaping a person’s moral and social behavior than regular Bible reading.”⁷

How often is “regular Bible reading?” British preacher John Blanchard explains,

We only have to be realistic and honest with ourselves to know how regularly we need to turn to the Bible. How often do we face problems, temptation and pressure? *Every day!* Then how often do we need instruction, guidance and greater encouragement? *Every day!* To catch all these felt needs up into an even greater issue, how often do we need to see God’s face, hear his voice, feel his touch, know his power? The answer to all these questions is the same: *every day!* As the American evangelist D. L. Moody put it, “A man can no more take in a supply of grace for the future than he can eat enough for the next six months, or take sufficient air into his lungs at one time to sustain life for a week. We must draw upon God’s boundless store of grace from day to day as we need it”⁸ (emphasis original).

If God is to be a priority in anyone’s life, they must make time to read His Word. If someone is too busy to read the Bible daily, then his or her priorities are out of order.

Whitney explains, “Just as we schedule times to eat our physical food, so we must do the

⁶ Peter Lewis, *The Genius of Puritanism* (Haywards Heath, England: Carey Publications, 1979), 54.

⁷ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 32-33.

⁸ John Blanchard, *How to Enjoy Your Bible* (Colchester, England: Evangelical Press, 1984), 104.

same for our spiritual food.”⁹ The Disciple-maker must make the daily reading of the Bible a priority.

Study

Studying the Bible involves comprehending the meaning of the Scriptures. One can hear and read the Bible without comprehension. The entire goal of learning the Scriptures is to apply them to life, and this cannot be accomplished without comprehension that is accomplished through study. Jerry Bridges comments, “Reading gives us breadth, but study gives us depth.”¹⁰ Richard Foster defines the term: “Study is a specific kind of experience in which through careful attention to reality, the mind is enabled to move in a certain direction.”¹¹ Biblical study leads the student in the direction of the renewal of the mind (Rom 12:2). Jesus tells His disciples to abide in the Word so that they may know the truth and be set free by the truth (John 8:31-32). Foster elaborates, “Good feelings will not free us. Ecstatic experiences will not free us. Getting ‘high on Jesus’ will not free us. Without a knowledge of the truth, we will not be free.”¹² Taking the time and effort to comprehend the meaning of Scripture is “abiding” in Christ’s Word; it brings freedom.

Memorize

The spiritual discipline of memorizing Scripture unlocks a vast treasure room that enriches one’s spiritual health. It is tedious work, but it is valuable work. Scripture explicitly teaches that hiding God’s word in the heart keeps believers from sin (Ps

⁹ Donald S. Whitney, *Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2001), 38.

¹⁰ Jerry Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1983), 51.

¹¹ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1998), 63.

¹² Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*.

119:105). Jesus facing temptation in the wilderness is a perfect example of the value of memorization. He battled His temptations with God's Word hidden in His heart (Matt 4). Paul rightly characterizes God's Word as a soldier's sword (Eph 6:17). A soldier uses his sword for both defense and offense. When God's Word is readily available in the disciple's heart, it will defend him or her from temptation and can be used to gain ground offensively through witnessing. Whitney lists four practical applications to memorizing Scripture: it supplies spiritual power; it strengthens one's faith; it aids in witnessing and counseling; and it is a means of personal guidance.¹³ Scripture memorization is hard work, but it is possible. If believers can memorize their birthday, phone number, and address, they can memorize Scripture.

Meditation

These convictions for Bible intake are progressive; they build on one another. They all aid the disciple to practice one final spiritual discipline—meditation. Unlike eastern philosophies of meditation, Christian meditation, according to Whitney, is “deep thinking on the truths and spiritual realities revealed in Scripture for the purposes of understanding, application, and prayer.”¹⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer explains, “Just as you do not analyze the words of someone you love, but accept them as they are said to you, accept the Word of Scripture and ponder it in your heart. . . . That is all. That is meditation.”¹⁵

Philippians 4:8 teaches the disciple to “think” about noble qualities; there is nothing nobler than the Word of God. It is through Christian meditation that the disciple can renew the mind (Rom 12:2) and be conformed to the image of God's Son (Rom

¹³ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 42-43.

¹⁴ Whitney, 48.

¹⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Way to Freedom* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 59.

8:29). In other words, it is through meditation that the disciple best applies God’s Word to his or her life. The disciplines of hearing, reading, studying, and memorizing aid the disciple to meditate on Scripture. In the previous “hand” illustration, the thumb is rightly labeled as meditation because the thumb is the dominant finger when grasping an object. Without Christian meditation the believer’s grasp on God’s Word will be weak. Meditation connects Christians to God’s Word in a way no other discipline can. The Bible is the foundational spoke that connects believers to Jesus.

Prayer

Prayer is a repeated command throughout the Bible.¹⁶ The prayer spoke is rightly located at the top of the disciple-making wheel. Prayer connects Christians to the heavenly Father and is essential to staying connected to Jesus. The disciple of Jesus is commanded to “be filled with the Spirit” (Eph 5:18). Prayer is the means to being Holy Spirit-filled disciples. E. M. Bounds explains, “The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men—men of prayer.”¹⁷

There is no substitute to connect with Jesus than through a meaningful prayer life; yet, most pastors will express great frustration when they attempt to encourage their members to pray.¹⁸ Prayerlessness is a serious hindrance to spiritual maturity and effectiveness as a disciple. A disciple can be devoted to every other discipline, but if this is neglected, he or she will be ineffective. Ben Jennings clarifies,

¹⁶ 2 Chr 7:14, Matt 5:44, Matt 26:41, Eph 6:18, Jas 5:13, and 1 John 5:16 are a few of the Scriptures that command God’s people to pray.

¹⁷ E. M. Bounds, *Power through Prayer* (Seattle: Amazon Digital Services LLC, 2012), 30-31, Kindle.

¹⁸ Erik Raymon, “If We Are So Burdened then Why Aren’t the Prayer Meetings Full?” *The Gospel Coalition* (September 2016), <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/erik-raymond/if-we-are-so-burdened-then-why-arent-the-prayer-meetings-full>.

Every prayerless day is a statement by a helpless individual, “I do not need God today.” Failing to pray reflects idolatry—a trust in substitutes for God. We rely on our money instead of God’s provision. We rest on our own flawed thinking rather than on God’s perfect wisdom. We take charge of our lives rather than trusting God. We consider His arena to be trivial until crushing needs drive us to our knees in prayer. Prayerlessness short-circuits the working of God. In His love, He imposes Himself on no one. He waits to be asked. Neglecting prayer, therefore, is not a weakness; it is a sinful choice.¹⁹

Prayer is the high privilege of conversing with the eternal God of the universe. It seems like it is too good of a reality to be true, but still, Christians struggle in their devotion to prayer. Whitney suggests that the greatest struggle one can have in developing a meaningful prayer life is their battle with boredom.²⁰ Christian prayers usually revolve around six things: family; future; finances; work or school; Christian concerns like ministry involvement and intercession; and current crises.²¹ The point Whitney makes is that after a Christian has prayed about the same old things day after day for years on end, it can easily become monotonous. This is when boredom creeps in, and prayer becomes meaningless. The remedy is not to pray about more than these six things. The solution is to pray about these same six things in new ways. Whitney is suggesting a change in one’s method of prayer to compensate for the monotony of praying about the same six categories of life. The method he is suggesting is simple, “When you pray, pray through a passage of Scripture, particularly a psalm.”²²

Many Christians depend upon their own intellect to guide their prayers. When this is a regular practice, Christians usually defer to praying about the same old things in the same old ways. However, when they let one or more of the 150 Psalms guide their prayers, they are still praying about the same old things, but in a new way. The book of Psalms covers a wide range of human emotions and experiences; therefore, there is

¹⁹ Ben Jennings, *The Arena of Prayer: Learn the Secrets of the World’s Greatest Privilege—Prayer* (Peachtree City, GA: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1999), 35.

²⁰ Donald S. Whitney, *Praying the Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 12.

²¹ Whitney, 18-19.

²² Whitney, 27.

always a psalm relevant to someone's human experiences at any given time. Moreover, this method of praying the Bible is beneficial in keeping the mind from wandering as it so often does when believers begin to pray. The method keeps the disciple on track. Some of the godliest of men have confessed to begin praying, according to their own intellect, only to realize after a few moments they are thinking about something other than prayer.

There are many other positive byproducts in praying the Bible. One of the grandest, yet unnoticeable byproducts, is that when disciples pray the Bible, they are praying God's Word. All genuine Christians want their prayers to be biblical. There is no better assurance one can have of praying biblical prayers than to pray the Bible. Joni Eareckson Tada explains,

I have learned to . . . season my prayers with the word of God. It's a way of talking to God in his language—speaking his dialect, using his vernacular, employing his idioms. . . . This is not a matter simply of divine vocabulary. It's a matter of power. When we bring God's word directly into our praying, we are bringing God's power into our praying. . . . God's word is living, and so it infuses our prayers with life and vitality. God's word is also active, injecting energy and power into our prayer.²³

Whitney has been teaching this method to Christians in conferences all over the world and the feedback he is receiving is phenomenal. After only one session of using the Bible as a guide to their prayers, people are responding:

My mind didn't wander; my prayer was more about God and less about me; the time was too short; it seemed like a real conversation with a real person; the psalm spoke directly to the life situation I am in right now; I thought more deeply about what the Bible says; I had greater assurance that I was praying God's will; I prayed about things I normally don't pray about; I prayed about things I normally do pray about but in new and different ways; [and] I didn't say the same old things about the same old things.²⁴

Prayer is meant to be meaningful and life-changing. It is meant to be simple enough that all believers, no matter how diverse, can find meaning in a daily prayer life. The disciple-maker must begin to grow in devotion to prayer. It is essential for

²³ Whitney, *Praying the Bible*, 42-43.

²⁴ Whitney, 66-77

connecting Christians to the most powerful and knowledgeable being in the universe—God.

The Church

The local church is an institution created by Jesus (Matt 16:18). It is not a club that someone joins for perks, privileges, and services; rather, it is best understood as God’s method to nurture a Christian into a mature disciple-maker. The church is a vital spoke that connects disciples to Jesus. Negligence to commit to a local church will doubtlessly stunt the growth of a disciple and may even identify someone as a false disciple.

There are many acts that identify individuals as a disciple of Jesus: a public profession; baptism; and church membership are some of the most prominent identifiers. However, there is one act that rises above all others when identifying followers of Jesus—the act of loving the family of God (John 13:34-35). Christ’s church is God’s design to enable Christians to love one another. Mark Dever has the local church in mind when he writes, “You and I cannot demonstrate love or joy or peace or patience or kindness sitting all by ourselves on an island. No, we demonstrate it when the people we have committed to loving give us good reasons *not* to love them, but we do anyway”²⁵ (emphasis original). Dever goes on to describe the love disciples have for one another: “The church gives a visual presentation of the gospel when we forgive one another as Christ has forgiven us, when we commit to one another as Christ has committed to us, and when we lay down our lives for one another as Christ laid down his life for us.”²⁶ The local church is an environment where Christians practice loving one another.

Dever states that when God reconciles sinners, they have “been reconciled to

²⁵ Mark Dever, *What Is a Healthy Church?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 28-29.

²⁶ Dever, *What is a Healthy Church?*, 29.

God's people."²⁷ Jonathan Leeman agrees, "Once you choose Christ, you must choose his people, too. It's a package deal. Choose the Father and the Son and you have to choose the whole family—which you do through a local church."²⁸ Disciples cannot love God without loving His people—the church (1 John 3:14-15). Failure to love God's people is an indication of a false conversion (1 John 2:19).

The most common way to commit to a *local church* is through *church membership*. There are a couple of terms that need to be defined—*local church* and *church membership*. Leeman defines them both: "A *local church* is a real-life embassy, set in the present, that represents Christ's future kingdom and his coming universal church"²⁹ (emphasis added). A crucial word in this definition is the word "embassy." Leeman defines an embassy as "an institution that represents one nation inside another nation."³⁰ American citizens can visit embassies all over the world that act on behalf of the homeland. The same is true of Christ's church. Christ's church represents the kingdom of God on earth; the host kingdom is a spiritual one located in heaven.

Moreover, an embassy does not make a person a citizen of the host country, but it can affirm the citizenship of an individual through credentialing. Likewise, a local church does not decide who can be a citizen of God's heavenly kingdom, but it can affirm someone's salvation through *church membership* and the privileges that go along with it. Church membership is a biblical act that affirms someone's salvation. When church membership is neglected, assurance of salvation is left in doubt.

Leeman defines a *church member* as "a person who has been officially and publicly recognized as a Christian before the nations, as well as someone who shares in

²⁷ Dever, *What Is a Healthy Church?*, 24.

²⁸ Jonathan Leeman, *Church Membership* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 31.

²⁹ Leeman, *Church Membership*, 28.

³⁰ Leeman, 27.

the same authority of officially affirming and overseeing other Christians in his or her church.”³¹ Churches must take their credentialing responsibility seriously. When churches fail to recognize who *is* and *is not* a Christian, churches become watered down until *church membership* means little or nothing at all. Church membership rolls become bloated with hundreds of individuals who have not attended services in years and could not even be found by the church after a careful search. *Church membership* should carry more meaning in Christian churches than it does. Leeman comments, “The local church is the authority on earth that Jesus has instituted to officially affirm and give shape to my Christian life and yours.”³² He continues, “Jesus didn’t leave us to govern ourselves and to declare ourselves his citizens. He left an institution in place that both affirms us as believers and then helps to give shape and direction to our Christian lives.”³³ In other words, a main purpose of the local church is to hold one another accountable.

Church accountability, otherwise known as *church discipline*, is often neglected in American churches. Those who desire to practice church discipline are afraid that they will be labeled as unloving and judgmental. They may even be accused of disobeying Christ’s command to “judge not” (Matt. 7:1). Those who are against church discipline have grossly misinterpreted several passages of Scripture. The prohibition to “judge” in Matthew 7 cannot be a prohibition to practice church discipline for Jesus is the one who gave instructions to observe both practices. Matthew 18:15-20 is Christ’s clear imperative to treat persistent, unrepentant church members as unsaved. The biblical command is to purge anyone living in persistent, unrepentant sin from church membership.³⁴ Dever comments, “It’s not surprising that the church is instructed

³¹ Leeman, *Church Membership*, 29.

³² Leeman, 24.

³³ Leeman, 29-30.

³⁴ See also 1 Cor 5, 2 Thess 3:6-15, 1 Tim 1:20, 1 Tim 5:19-20, and Titus 3:9-11.

to judge. After all, if we cannot say how a Christian *should not* live, how can we say how a Christian *should* live?”³⁵ (emphasis original).

The goal of church discipline is not exclusion, but reconciliation (Gal 6:1). The Scriptures command church discipline so that Christians living in sin can be brought back into a right relationship with God and His church. Those who practice church discipline desire to see their brothers and sisters in Christ reconciled not exiled.

Jesus loved the multitudes better than anyone else, and He has commanded his disciples to practice church discipline. Churches have neglected church discipline, thinking of it as unloving, but in reality, their neglect to practice church discipline was unloving. Dever explains, “Imagine Christians, knee-deep in recovery groups and sermons on brokenness and grace, being comforted in their sin but never confronted. Imagine those people, made in the image of God, being lost to sin because no one corrects them.”³⁶ The church cannot love any better than Jesus, and He has commanded church discipline.

Church discipline will accomplish one of two things. First, it will bring Christians back into a right relationship with God through repentance, or secondly, it will reveal those who are unwilling to repent of their sin as the false converts they have always been. The result of either outcome is the purification of Christ’s church.

Dever lists five benefits for the church that practices church discipline: (1) “for the good of the person disciplined;” (2) “for the good of other Christians, as they see the danger of sin;” (3) “for the health of the church as a whole;” (4) “for the corporate witness of the church;” and (5) “for the glory of God, as we reflect His holiness.”³⁷ A

³⁵ Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 183.

³⁶ Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, 198-99.

³⁷ Dever, 200-202.

church that willfully neglects church discipline suffers the loss of these benefits. Moreover, these neglectful churches will be held accountable to God. Godly men throughout history have spoken harshly about churches that willfully neglect church discipline. Gregory A. Wills writes of churches throughout the history of Christianity, “A church without discipline would hardly have counted as a church.”³⁸ John Dagg takes it a step further: “When discipline leaves a church, Christ goes with it.”³⁹ Disciple-makers will mature when they make a healthy church the priority the Bible commands.

Witnessing

The meaning of the words *disciple-maker* is two-fold. First, it entails disciplines that must be practiced—Bible intake, prayer, and commitment to Christ’s church. These three disciplines develop someone into a disciple of Christ, but by definition, a *disciple-maker* is also someone who is intentional to make disciples of others. It should be normal for disciples of Christ to witness regularly to those they encounter.

Bill Hull gives a good definition of a disciple-maker: The disciple-maker “seeks to deliver people, develop them, and deploy them into the harvest field.”⁴⁰ The disciple-maker does not stop when the lost are saved, nor when the convert grows in his or her commitment to spiritual disciplines. The goal is to produce a reproducing disciple. Hull argues that this was the goal of the early church:

The first church had the intentional strategy of making reproducing disciples, as described in Acts 2:42–47. Guided by Acts 1:8, the Twelve must have planned to send out many disciples. A reproductive congregation led to believers who reproduced the same practices wherever they went. They would start churches by

³⁸ Gregory A. Wills, *Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South, 1784-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 33.

³⁹ John L. Dagg, *Manual of Church Order* (Harrisonburg, VA: Gano, 1982), 274.

⁴⁰ Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010), 20.

preaching and would organize converts into small groups that would practice these priorities and reproduce in turn.⁴¹

The early church saw exponential growth during its time due to its commitment to develop reproducing disciples.

The Message

To gain exponential growth at FFBC, the church must share the message of the Gospel to those they encounter. J. Mack Stiles says that the message is shared by following the outline: God; mankind; Christ; and response.⁴²

God. There are many opinions about the nature of God. For example, many think of God like a cosmic Santa Claus who exists solely to give people the things they want. To understand the Gospel, one must have a biblical understanding of who God is. The Bible teaches that God is the Creator of all (Gen 1:1). He is active in His creation and is ruling it according to His own will and purpose (Eph 1:11). God is loving toward His creation (1 John 4:16), but He is also Holy (Rev 4:8) and Just (Ps 34:14-15). One day, He will judge the nations in righteousness (Rev 20:11-15).

Mankind. Mankind exists to give God glory (Ps 86:8-10). All of mankind is created in the image of God (Gen 1:27), and therefore, set apart from the rest of creation. God sees all of mankind with a high value, worth, and dignity. However, mankind is fallen and sinful (Rom 3:23). Mankind's rebellious nature has made themselves enemies of God (Jas 4:4). Sinful mankind cannot have fellowship with God (Isa 59:2). Unless something changes with their rebellious nature, mankind is headed for hell (John 8:24).

⁴¹ Hull, *Disciple Making Church*, 215.

⁴² J. Mack Stiles, *Evangelism: How the Whole Church Speaks of Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 33.

Christ. Jesus Christ is the sinless Son of God (Heb 4:15, John 3:16). He is God in human flesh (John 1:1, 14). He died on the cross as the only substitute for the payment of all the sins of the world (1 John 2:2). His resurrection proves these truths. The sacrificial death of Christ displays the amazing love of God toward mankind (Eph 5:2).

Response. The *response* that God requires is the acceptance of these truths and the full surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Rom 10:9). This is a one-time event with lifelong and eternal significance. It is by hearing this gospel message that one believes and is saved (Eph 1:13). This message must be communicated. Without communicating this message, the lost have no chance to believe and receive forgiveness of sins. The consequence of the failure to share the message is the eternal damnation of the souls of mankind. It is no exaggeration to say that there is no greater need than to share the Gospel of God's redemption through Christ.

The Need

The need to share the Gospel is the right motivation that compels believers to become disciple-makers. The fact of the matter is that people are lost (Rom. 3:10-12). They are headed toward hell. Unless someone shares the Gospel with them, they have zero chance of escaping their destiny in hell. Every right-thinking Christian is thankful that someone shared the Gospel with him or her. If they were honest, they might not have wanted to hear this message when they did, but they heard it and eventually believed. The same is true in the present world. Lost people are usually not appreciative to hear the things of God until they believe. Afterward, there is enormous gratitude toward the one who opened their eyes to the reality of spiritual truths.

Moreover, God is being robbed of worship because the lost are not being challenged to respond to the Gospel message. The lost are unable to rightly praise God (Prov 21:27). The worship of Almighty God is of the utmost priority for Christ's

disciples. John Piper famously wrote, “Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.”⁴³ Will Metzger agrees with Piper: “I am compelled to put evangelism in its proper place: it’s number *two* on God’s agenda. Worship is number *one*”⁴⁴ (emphasis original).

Disciples share the Gospel because of their love for *people* and the destiny of their souls, but even more, disciples share the Gospel because of their love for *God* and their desire to see Him rightly praised by all people. As John Dawson explains, it is only one’s love for God that can sustain Christians to witness regularly over the span of a lifetime:

Don’t wait for a feeling of love in order to share Christ with a stranger. You already love your heavenly Father, and you know that this stranger is created by Him, but separated from Him, so take those first steps in evangelism because you love God. It is not primarily out of a compassion for humanity that we share our faith or pray for the lost; it is first of all, love for God.

God is calling us above all else to be the kind of people whose theme and passion is the supremacy of God in all of life. No one will be able to rise to the magnificence of the missionary cause who does not feel the magnificence of Christ. There will be no big world vision without a macro God. There will be no passion to draw others into our worship where there is no passion for worship.⁴⁵

Keys to Sharing

It is vital to note that when one shares the message of the Gospel, it is not necessary to begin in the same place every time. For example, it is not necessary to

⁴³ John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 11.

⁴⁴ Will Metzger, *Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel Wholly by Grace Communicated Truthfully and Lovingly, An Evangelism Training Manual for Group and Individual Use* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 179.

⁴⁵ Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 180.

spend energy and time sharing the nature of God with someone who already knows and agrees with those spiritual truths. In this instance, begin the conversation with the nature of man.

However, it is of the utmost importance that none of the four essential truths of the Gospel are minimized or overlooked. Bonhoeffer warns, “We must not make cheap what cost God everything.”⁴⁶ For example, preachers love to preach on the forgiveness of sins, but if they have not first shared the reality of mankind’s sinful condition, then the cross of Christ is minimized and difficult to comprehend. Likewise, it is not enough to communicate the first three truths of the Gospel. A preacher must also communicate that sinners must respond. All four truths are necessary, or the Gospel will be misrepresented, and false converts will emerge.

A word of caution is appropriate for disciple-makers. It may seem loving to minimize any of the four truths, but the results can be devastating. Metzger explains,

It is possible to encourage unbelievers to arrive at decisions from false motives. They ‘become Christians’ for what they can get out of it, such as coveting the speaker’s experience or happiness or success in life. The true reason for becoming a Christian is not that we may have a wonderful life but that we may be in a right relationship to God.⁴⁷

Hull also warns of this danger:

People can be an acolyte, wear a robe, and carry a cross in a processional. They can teach a Bible study or be an usher. They can even pastor a church if they’d like. They can even believe in Jesus in the way we think of faith now—as mental assent to his teachings and to the doctrine of the church. They can do all this and decide not to follow Jesus.⁴⁸

Sam Greer adds, “Jesus refused to lower the requirements for following him.”⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Hull, *Disciple-Making*, 12.

⁴⁷ Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 77.

⁴⁸ Hull, *Disciple-Making*, 12.

⁴⁹ Sam Greer, *The Gospel Conversation: Engaging the Lost in Everyday Life* (Middletown, DE: Create Space Publishing, 2017), 74.

Disciple-makers cannot do what Jesus refused to do. The end goal is for disciple-makers to reproduce disciple-makers. Neglecting any of the essential truths of the Gospel does not accomplish this end goal. Robert Coleman agrees, “What really counts in the ultimate perpetuation of our work is the faithfulness with which our converts go and make leaders out of their converts, not simply more followers.”⁵⁰

It is not unusual in the American culture for many individuals to have a basic, biblical understanding of the nature of God. It is uncommon, however, that they have a biblical understanding of the nature of man. The American culture has bought into the lie that humanity is basically good. This is far from biblical truth. Biblical truth states that mankind is utterly sinful (Rom 3:10-12) and has no hope of saving themselves (Eph 2:1-3). Herein lies a major hurdle in sharing the Gospel message. This hurdle is a reality, but it is not impossible to overcome.

The Ten Commandments, otherwise known as “God’s law,” are especially effective in overcoming this hurdle. The Ten Commandments show mankind their sinful condition before a Holy God (Rom 3:19-20, 7:7). Many notable Christians throughout history have utilized the law to awaken men and women to their sinfulness, and thus, their dire need for a savior. Martin Luther writes his comments on Romans 7:9,

So it is with the work-righteous and the proud unbelievers. Because they do not know the Law of God, which is directed against them, it is impossible for them to know their sin. Therefore also they are not amenable to instruction. If they would know the Law, they would also know their sin; and sin to which they are now dead would become alive in them.⁵¹

Martin Lloyd-Jones writes,

The trouble with people who are not seeking for a Savior, and for salvation, is that they do not understand the nature of sin. It is the peculiar function of the Law to bring such an understanding to a man’s mind and conscience. That is why great

⁵⁰ Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1993), 94.

⁵¹ Martin Luther, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. J.Theodore Mueller (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2003), 111.

evangelical preachers 300 years ago in the time of the Puritans, and 200 years ago in the time of Whitefield and others, always engaged in what they called a preliminary “Law work.”⁵²

John Bunyan writes, “In my preaching of the Word, I took special notice of this one thing, namely, that the Lord did lead me to begin where His Word begins with sinners; that is, to condemn all flesh, and to open and allege, that the curse of God by the Law doth belong to, and lay hold on all men as they come into the world, because of sin.”⁵³

Philip Melanchthon adds,

There are many who speak only of the forgiveness of sin, but who say little or nothing about repentance. If there is nevertheless no forgiveness of sins without repentance, so also forgiveness of sins cannot be understood without repentance. Therefore, if forgiveness of sins is preached without repentance, it follows that the people imagine they have already received the forgiveness of sins, and thereby they become cocksure and fearless, which is then greater error and sin than all the error that preceded our time.⁵⁴

Charles Spurgeon agrees, “I do not believe that any man can preach the gospel who does not preach the Law. The Law is the needle, and you cannot draw the silken thread of the gospel through a man’s heart unless you first send the needle of the Law to make way for it.”⁵⁵

The Ten Commandments are the best way to show mankind their sinfulness and cannot be overlooked. It is usually the bulk of the work when sharing the Gospel in American culture. Once sinners become convinced of their depravity, they are eager to find a savior to redeem them.

⁵² Kirk Cameron and Ray Comfort, *The School of Biblical Evangelism: 101 Lessons: How to Share Your Faith Simply, Effectively, Biblically . . . the Way Jesus Did*, (Gainesville, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2004), 25.

⁵³ John Bunyan, *The Entire Works of John Bunyan*, ed. Henry Stebbing (Toronto: Virtue and Yorston, 1859), 36.

⁵⁴ Cameron and Comfort. *School of Biblical Evangelism*, 110.

⁵⁵ C. H. Spurgeon and Tom Carter, *Spurgeon at His Best: Over 2200 Striking Quotations from the World’s Most Exhaustive and Widely-Read Sermon Series* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 118.

Overcoming Fear

The last topic addressed in this chapter is the need to overcome fear when sharing the Gospel. Kevin Ruffcorn says, “Fear is the greatest threat to any evangelism proposal.”⁵⁶ Is it normal for disciple-makers to fear starting a gospel conversation? Absolutely!, this fear is not only normal; it is helpful. Billy Graham was once asked if he still feared sharing the Gospel in a one to one setting. He replied, “Of course! Who doesn’t? In fact, if I didn’t feel a bit nervous, I would assume I was witnessing in my own strength. God allows us to feel a bit nervous, so we will trust in him and his power.”⁵⁷ Even the Apostle Paul expressed fear during his ministry (1 Cor 2:3). The difference, however, is that Paul did not allow his fears to paralyze him into disobedience. All genuine believers are called to be witnesses for Christ (Acts 1:8) despite their fears.⁵⁸ The secret to overcoming fear is to rely on the Holy Spirit for courage.

Some of the most common fears that keep Christians from witnessing are rejection, looking stupid, being labeled a zealot, or being asked a difficult question. The good news is that all fears can be overcome. Study, practice, and experience overcome these fears. Greer states, “Evangelism is work.”⁵⁹ Disciple-makers must put some effort into learning how to best witness. Stiles agrees, “It’s not that evangelism has been tried and found wanting, it’s that evangelism has been found difficult and left untried.”⁶⁰ Just as the best way to learn to swim is by being in the water, so it is with witnessing. One could study swimming, read books on swimming, and watch swimmers all day long, but

⁵⁶ Kevin E. Ruffcorn, *Rural Evangelism: Catching the Vision* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1994), 99.

⁵⁷ Timothy Beougher, e-mail message to author, July 22, 2019.

⁵⁸ Greer, *Gospel Conversation*, 60.

⁵⁹ Greer, 91.

⁶⁰ Stiles, *Evangelism*, 42.

would not learn to swim until after entering the water. Every new endeavor is a little scary, but with study, practice, and experience, most fears are found to be unrealistic. Disciple-makers cannot let witnessing be left untried.

In reality, disciple-makers who regularly practice witnessing will make a difference in the lives of some. Stiles explains, “The fact is, most people come to faith through the influence of family members, small-group Bible Studies, or a conversation with a friend after a church service.” Hull adds, “Ninety percent of all people attend a church because a friend brought them.”⁶¹ Thom Rainer agrees, “Sadly, only 2% of the church members invite the unchurched to church, while 80% of the unchurched would come to church if invited by the church.”⁶² Rainer adds,

Almost eight of ten unchurched Americans would welcome a gospel conversation. Another 12% would discuss it with some discomfort, and only 11% would change the subject as soon as possible. We can’t use the poor excuse that the unchurched really aren’t interested in gospel conversations. In reality, church members are more likely not to be interested in initiating gospel conversations.⁶³

Rainer lists five encouraging truths for witnessing to the unchurched: (1) “most unchurched do indeed have some church background;” (2) “most unchurched quit church because they got out of the habit of churchgoing;” (3) “one-third of the unchurched have plans to go to church in the future;” (4) “the unchurched are very open to gospel conversations;” and (5) “if you invite them, they will come.”⁶⁴

It is necessary to understand that there will be occasional opposition. Not everyone is open to spiritual conversation. Hull explains, “Think of conflict as normal,

⁶¹ Hull, *Disciple-Making Church*, 198.

⁶² Thom S. Rainer, *The Unchurched Next Door: Understanding Faith Stages As Keys to Sharing Your Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 25.

⁶³ Thom S. Rainer, “Five Surprising Insights about the Unchurched,” *Growing Healthy Churches. Together* (December 2016), <https://thomrainer.com/2016/12/five-surprising-insights-unchurched/>.

⁶⁴ Rainer, “Five Surprising Insights.”

and you can emotionally adjust and continue to concentrate on the mission.”⁶⁵ This is excellent advice. Many Christians have given up on their witnessing endeavors because of one or two discouraging encounters. According to Hull, New Testament disciple-makers were not only prepared for opposition, “they considered it a sure sign of their success”⁶⁶ (Acts 14:22).

The best motivation to overcome the fear of witnessing is love for God. Greer explains, “God’s glory is the primary reason to engage the lost in everyday life. Jesus is not one Christ among many Christs. Jesus alone is the Christ. He alone is worthy of all the worship of every tongue, tribe, nation, and people. Evangelism in everyday life must be a priority because Jesus is worthy of every person’s worship.”⁶⁷ When disciple-makers grow in their love for God, they find themselves naturally compelled to share with others about their great God.

Conclusion

The four convictions of Bible intake, prayer, commitment to a local church, and witnessing will produce disciple-makers. There are other helpful disciplines, but these four are essential. They connect Christians to Jesus and yield reproducing disciples that multiply the kingdom of God now and for generations to come.

⁶⁵ Hull, *Disciple-Making Church*, 116.

⁶⁶ Hull, *Disciple-Making Church*, 116.

⁶⁷ Greer, *Gospel Conversation*, 89.

CHAPTER 4

DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPING DISCIPLE-MAKERS

Before project implementation began, I received all necessary approval from my faculty supervisor and the Ethics Research Committee of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The details and description of developing disciple-makers at FFBC included promoting the project, developing and administering the pre-test Disciple-Making Survey¹ (DMS), creating and teaching the project curriculum², administering the post-test DMS³, and analyzing the pre- and post-test results. The implementation of the project began on August 18, 2019 and continued through December 15, 2019.

Project Promotion

Promotion of the project began formally on August 11, 2019 with a pulpit announcement. Beforehand, I discussed the project in weekly leadership meetings on both July 28 and August 4. Additionally, I made personal invitations as the opportunity arose. The week before I administered the pre-test DMS, I visited each of the adults' Sunday school classes and handed a sample survey to the adult Sunday school teachers. I answered questions and explained the purpose of the survey. I communicated with them that the DMS would be administered to their class the next week, and completed during the Sunday school hour. I received support from everyone in this new endeavor. An air

¹ See appendix 1.

² See appendix 2.

³ See appendix 4.

of excitement was upon the church. They had never participated in something like this before. I continued to promote the project over the next several weeks, even after I initially administered the DMS, as there were six weeks of curriculum development and anticipation before I formally taught the curriculum. I continued to promote the project throughout the six-weeks of teaching but did not offer anyone a post-test DMS unless they attended at least three weeks of the series.

The Pre-Test Disciple-Making Survey

The first goal was to assess the disciple-making habits and practices of regular attending adult Sunday school members. To obtain this information, I constructed the DMS. The first four questions recorded demographic information. Then the DMS evaluated two areas. In the first section, participants evaluated 23 items to assess their personal, spiritual habits. Participants need to be practicing specific disciplines themselves to make disciples of others. The second section contained 23 additional items used to assess participants' motives and regular efforts in developing disciples. Thus, the DMS contained 50 questions or items.

I administered the pre-test DMS to all adult Sunday School classes on August 18, 2019. I received 64 completed surveys. I knew that I would not have the same participation in the six-week series but thought that it would be good for the pre-test to reach as many adults as possible for two reasons. First, I thought it would be good to confront the regular attenders with the survey. I wanted to force them to think through issues that effected their spiritual maturity. Second, I thought the survey might spark interest so that more might participate in the six-week curriculum. It is human nature to become complacent in one's spiritual life. The DMS would confront and convict these complacent attitudes.

I took the entire following Monday to record and analyze the results of the pre-test DMS. The results were exciting and helpful in determining the direction of the

curriculum. The participants were to rank their responses between strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (6). The personal, spiritual habits section ranked significantly higher than the disciple-making practices. Participants averaged 5.11 and 4.56 respectively. Thus, it seems that FFBC is like most other Baptist churches. The core members have a good deal of Bible knowledge, and many practice some spiritual disciplines, but they find it more challenging to put their faith into action. The overall average was 4.84.

All participants identified themselves as Christian. All but one answered “yes” when asked, “Have you repented of your sins and confessed Jesus as Lord?” Forty-seven of the pre-test participants were married. Seventeen were single. The following table displays their ages.

Table 1. Ages ranges of participants

17 and younger	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 and older
0	5	2	11	10	9	16	11

Table 1 displays the need for an emphasis on disciple-making. Only 18 participants (28 percent) are under the age of 45. The average age is in the 55-64 years-old range. However, this percentage is skewed when it is understood that individuals under the age of 18 were not contributing participants in the research. Their inclusion would have brought the average age down significantly. Nonetheless, there is a great need for young adults to be evangelized, discipled, and set on the path of disciple-making.

FFBC participants answered eight items that ranked significantly higher than the other answers in the first section. Table 2, on the next page, represents these figures in their descending rank.

Item 5 was the first of the Spiritual Habits statements and the first of ranking answers from a 1 to 6 scale. It was meant to establish a basis for the project and for

Table 2. Highest pre-test results regarding spiritual habits

Spiritual Habit	Average	Number of responses
5. I am interested in learning about God.	5.83	64
26. I see myself as loved and valued by God.	5.67	64
11. I regularly attend church.	5.48	64
8. I am passionate about my relationship with God.	5.45	64
25. I believe the Holy Spirit is active in my life.	5.45	64
17. When I learn that I have disobeyed the teachings of the Bible, I try to correct my behavior.	5.43	63
9. I strive to live by the moral principles found in the Bible.	5.42	64
12. I regularly attend Sunday School.	5.41	64

evaluating the following statements. Thus, it was not surprising that it received much higher rankings than all other statements. I am pleased with the high result for item 26. One may surmise that this high result is due to the typical Baptist emphasis on teaching the love of God. Items 11 and 12 were naturally high because those who answered them were in Sunday school at church. High results on items 25, 17, and 9 were very encouraging. These high marks displayed the raw material necessary to develop believers into mature disciple-makers. Item 25 displays an awareness of the Holy Spirit's leading, while items 17 and 9 display the much-needed conviction towards biblical authority. Since these foundations are already in place, it makes the task of developing disciple-makers much more likely.

Table 3, on the next page, displays the lowest responses to the Spiritual Habits items. They are listed in ascending order. These results display the areas of need in the development of the curriculum. The good news is that these are convictions that can become priorities in a believer's life. Once these few areas become priorities, it is likely to make a significant impact on the development of disciple-making.

Table 3. Lowest pre-test results regarding spiritual habits

Spiritual Habit	Average	Number of responses
22. I feel confident in my abilities to lead someone to faith in Christ.	4.25	64
6. I spend time each day reading the Bible.	4.33	63
7. I have a dedicated prayer time each day of the week.	4.50	64
20. I pray with other believers regularly.	4.59	64

Interestingly, 22 items were left unanswered. I think this occurred for one of three reasons. The first reason participants left items unanswered was because two individuals failed to realize there were four items on the back of the last page. Thus, eight of the unanswered items were due to human error. More items could have been left blank due to human error, but it is difficult to know for sure. Besides these eight unanswered items, the remaining unanswered items were scattered throughout the surveys. In other words, one or two respondents *did not* leave the remaining 14 items unanswered.

Second, some participants left items blank because they did not understand the statement. This was the case for item 38: “I believe all Christians are responsible to play a role in completing The Great Commission.” Two individuals left this item blank because they were ignorant of The Great Commission. I suppose this displays a need to further educate FFBC Sunday school attenders about The Great Commission. On the other hand, I was pleased that 62 persons were aware enough of The Great Commission to at least evaluate the item. More items could have been left unanswered due to a lack of understanding, but again, it would be difficult to know for sure.

Last, some items were left unanswered because participants did not want to think through the item or because they did not want to score low on that item. Even though the surveys were anonymous, it still hurts human pride to score one’s self negatively. It may have been easier to leave the item unanswered than to score one’s self

in an undesirable manner. This could have been the case for item 15: “I have someone to help hold me accountable in my spiritual life.” Three individuals made no response to this item. It is difficult to imagine that three persons considered this item too vague to comprehend. More likely, three persons understood the need for accountability, and were embarrassed that they have not incorporated accountability into their Christian life. With the 61 responses, this item averaged 4.97. If these three participants had honestly answered this item with a “3” or lower, it would have averaged less. Perhaps the fact that this item was unanswered by three individuals might display a need to teach the necessity of accountability. Aside from this item on accountability, The Great Commission item, and the four unanswered items on the last page (left unanswered by oversight), no other statement received more than one blank answer.

The second section had fewer high-ranking answers than the first. Table 4 lists the four highest-ranking answers in their descending order.

Table 4. Highest pre-test results of disciple-making habits

Disciple-Making Habit	Average	Number of responses
49. One day God will hold me accountable for how I have ministered to others.	5.73	62
38. I believe all Christians are responsible to play a role in completing The Great Commission.	5.37	62
43. I am intentionally patient, kind, and generous to my servers when eating at a restaurant.	5.33	64
32. My neighbors and co-workers know that I am a Christian.	5.30	64

The high marks on items 49 and 38 are encouraging. They display results that are beneficial for developing disciple-makers. The high results of items 43 and 32 displays an awareness that Christians are always making disciples with the way they live their lives. These high results are very encouraging foundations to help develop believers into mature disciple-makers.

There were seven notably lower-ranking answers in the second section. Table 5 displays their results in ascending order.

Table 5. Lowest pre-test results of disciple-making habits

Disciple-Making Habit	Average	Number of responses
35. I regularly carry gospel tracts with me.	2.98	63
36. I utilize gospel tracts in my witnessing.	3.08	63
37. I have found gospel tracts that I really like.	3.86	63
46. I am involved in missions efforts.	3.94	63
34. I feel confident in my abilities to teach other believers how to know God better.	4.11	64
33. I seek out opportunities to talk to others about spiritual matters.	4.14	64
47. I feel burdened to make visits to those I know are injured, sick, or homebound.	4.19	62

Low scores on the three “gospel tracts” items display missed opportunities. Gospel tracts are a significant, simple way to share Jesus Christ with others. There are numerous tracts that are eye-catching and faithful to the Gospel message. Teaching FFBC to utilize this informal method would significantly increase the number of contacts members have with the unchurched. This method was a priority during the curriculum implementation.

The low result of item 46 is a little discouraging. The item yielded 3 people who answered it as “strongly disagree,” 8 people who answered it as “disagree,” and another 8 who answered it as “disagree somewhat.” FFBC is a mission-minded church. They rank annually among the state in their percentage of giving toward missions causes. They participate in missions efforts locally several times throughout the year. They minister to their community and are actively teaching children the Gospel message. The low result of this item exists for one of two reasons. First, this low result exists because members of FFBC do not perceive their usual efforts as missions; or second, this low result exists because only a small percentage of adults are actively participating in the church’s regular missions efforts. The reality of this result could be a little bit of both

scenarios. Either way, it seems apparent that members need to be better educated and motivated toward missions efforts. The pre-test DMS proved very informative.

Curriculum Development

The second goal was to develop a six-session curriculum to train, equip, and convict participants to be disciple-makers. The goal was successfully met when the curriculum was fully developed and approved by an expert panel. The panel utilized a rubric to evaluate the curriculum.⁴ The rubric evaluated the curriculum in three areas: clarity; biblical faithfulness; and relevance. The panel consisted of four Southern Baptist leaders: one local pastor; one associational leader; one ministry director; and one deacon from FFBC. I contacted each person of the panel personally and answered all their questions. Additionally, I mailed a formal letter explaining each step of the evaluation process.⁵ All four participants agreed to evaluate the curriculum.

Curriculum development began on August 24. The first draft of the first lesson was sent out for evaluation on August 27. One evaluator did not score the first lesson at the required 90 percent “sufficient” level. Other evaluators scored the first lesson at the needed 90 percent requirement, but scored the same sub-category in the “needs attention” level. It was apparent the first lesson needed work particularly in the area of stating the main point and sub-points clearly. I revised the lesson with the suggestions from the panel and received the necessary approval. I was careful to construct the remaining lessons with clearly stated main and subpoints and received positive feedback.

The remaining five lessons were constructed and evaluated at a rate of one per week. All remaining lessons met or exceeded the sufficient level. The expert panel made several suggestions and I carefully considered each one. Many suggestions were

⁴ See appendix 3.

⁵ See appendix 6 for a copy of the letter detailing the evaluation process.

implemented. Table 6 tabulates the evaluations of all six lessons.⁶ Only one evaluator failed to return one of the lessons.

Table 6. Evaluation tabulations of all six lessons

<u>Clarity</u>	1	2	3	4
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.	–	–	9	14
The main point of the lesson is clearly stated.	–	1	3	19
The sub-points of the lesson support the thesis.	–	2	6	15
Overall, the lesson is clearly presented.	–	–	5	18
<u>Biblical Faithfulness</u>				
The material is faithful to the Bible’s teaching on disciple-making.	–	–	6	17
Scripture was correctly interpreted and applied to disciple-making.	–	–	4	19
Scripture was correctly interpreted and applied to disciple-making.	–	–	5	18
Scripture references are relevant to disciple-making.	–	–	3	20
<u>Relevance</u>				
The lesson is clearly relevant to the issue of disciple-making.	–	–	4	19
The lesson contains points of practical application.	–	–	9	14
Overall, the lesson is clearly relevant.	–	–	4	19

I received the lowest marks in three categories. First, the early lessons received low marks in the organization of the structure. The lessons were revised, and the subsequent lessons were carefully structured. Second, one evaluator consistently scored the lessons lower than the others in the “thoroughness” category. I considered this critique very carefully and would like to have elaborated. However, I wanted to keep the points digestible and straightforward, so they were not missed. I concluded that further elaboration would detract from the purpose of the lessons. The last evaluation of concern was titled “The lesson contains points of practical application.” It received the least “exemplary” marks; however, it did receive all its marks in the sufficient or higher category. This fact did make me extra conscious of emphasizing practical application

⁶ The scoring options of the rubric were as follows: 1 = insufficient; 2 = needs attention; 3 = sufficient; and 4 = exemplary.

during the six weeks of teaching.

Teaching the Curriculum

The third goal was to teach regular attending adult Sunday school members to become disciple-makers. This goal succeeded when the instruction was complete, and at least fifteen adults showed significant statistical improvement through a t-test for dependent means. The lessons were taught on Sunday nights at 6 pm. I introduced the first lesson on October 13 and taught subsequent lessons once per week. We finished November 17, the week before Thanksgiving. I thought it pivotal to finish before the busyness of Thanksgiving as our Sunday evening services fluctuate considerably during Thanksgiving and December.

The teaching lessons were decently attended. Attendance can always be better; however, 34 adults attended at least one of the lessons. As previously mentioned, FFBC consists of predominately “older” members. Due to sickness, surgeries, traveling, and the lack of daylight hours, only 23 adults made it to 3 or more lessons. Eight adults made all six lessons, and six adults missed once. Only these 23 adults could participate in the post-test DMS. I distributed the surveys at the end of the sixth lesson taught on November 17. Participants were instructed to return the surveys the following week. In retrospect, it was a mistake not to ask the participants to complete the surveys before they departed on November 17. Of these 23 adults, 19 returned their post-test DMS.

I surmise that the four remaining adults did not return their surveys for one of two reasons. First, many of the adults had great difficulty recalling their identification number. For the surveys to remain anonymous, individuals created an identification number. I anticipated participants would have difficulty recalling their identification numbers and therefore, listed all the identification numbers on a single sheet of paper when I re-administered the post-test DMS. Participants could peruse the numbers and see if one was more familiar than the others. This proved helpful for many of the adults who

returned the post-test DMS, but I think that a few participants could still not recall their identification number; and therefore, did not complete their post-test survey. Second, it is likely that some forgot to return their survey. They meant to, but in the busyness of the Thanksgiving holiday, some simply forgot.

I developed the curriculum to include six lessons. The first lesson was foundational to the idea of developing disciple-makers. It was entitled “Disciple-Making, Not an Option.” This lesson included a two-fold main idea. First, a disciple of Jesus Christ is a follower of Jesus. Disciples must follow His teachings. Second, Jesus taught that disciple-making is a requirement of being His disciple. In other words, His disciples make other disciples. This truth is at the core of what it means to be Jesus’ follower. The second lesson developed the essential trait of being Jesus’ disciple. It was entitled “Christ is the Center in the Life of a Disciple-Maker.” It emphasized the Christian’s need to abide in Christ through a faithful love relationship with Him.

The remaining four lessons focused on one of four spiritual disciplines that encouraged disciples to abide in Christ. Abiding in Christ helps disciples mature and therefore, enables them to teach others how to become better disciples. The third lesson was entitled “The Word, God’s Agent of Sanctification.” It promoted the necessity of being a student of the Bible through daily Bible intake. The fourth lesson was entitled “Prayer, The Christian’s Source of Power.” It promoted the necessity of being a student of prayer throughout one’s Christian life. The fifth lesson was entitled “The Church, God’s Agency.” Its main idea stated that “the local church is vital to the health of a disciple.” Faithfulness to Christ’s church is not optional. The last lesson was entitled “Witnessing, Christ’s Expectation.” This lesson taught Christ’s command to be His witnesses.

I also developed weekly handouts for participants to complete as I taught each

lesson. The lessons and handouts depended heavily upon a metaphor.⁷ The disciple-making Christian is compared to a wheel. The wheel is made up of three parts: the hub at the center of the wheel; the outer wheel where the rubber meets the road; and four spokes that connect the outer wheel to the hub. Likewise, the disciple must make Jesus the center of his or her life. The outer wheel represents the disciple. The disciple will only make progress in life if he or she is connected to Jesus. The spokes in the metaphor represent the spiritual disciplines of Bible intake, prayer, church commitment, and witnessing. When disciples make these four disciplines a priority, they connect themselves to Jesus and receive power from the hub. Many comments were made that proved the handouts and the metaphor useful.

Each lesson included a weekly memory verse. The participants received the challenge of memorizing Scripture exceptionally well. Each lesson emphasized a key Bible passage, and it became the week's memory verse. One participant took the challenge to heart and his commitment helped motivate the other participants. In the third week of the curriculum, he stood up and recited the previous memory verse, thanked me for challenging him, and challenged others to commit the verses to memory. He admitted that he had memorized Scripture often when he first became a Christian, but that this was the first verse he had memorized in more than a decade. The other participants received his challenge and I made a point each night for participants to recite the verses from memory. It has remained a priority on Sunday nights even though the projected ended two months ago.

The Post-Test DMS

After the sixth lesson, a post-test DMS was administered to measure the effectiveness of the teaching intervention. Participants were to turn in the completed

⁷ See the lessons in appendix 2 for the diagram of "The Wheel" metaphor.

surveys the following week. Collecting the completed surveys proved more difficult than anticipated. After weeks of begging for completed surveys, I concluded that I had all the surveys I would receive on December 15, almost an entire month after completing the curriculum. A handful of surveys were returned the week before December 15. Sadly, this delay held up my writing of chapter 4 as I could not calculate the t-test for dependent means until I received the completed surveys.

Once the post-test DMS was collected, they were analyzed and compared to those 19 participants’ pre-test DMS. This was the first time I was able to analyze the actual participants’ pre-test surveys. Previously, the pre-test surveys were from the larger population of the entire church. Now that I knew who committed themselves to the curriculum, I could analyze their pre-test data. Those who committed themselves to the six-week series averaged higher scores on the pre-test than the larger church population. It is safe to say that those who made the extra effort to take part in the “Developing Disciple-Makers” series were more mature believers. Table 7 lists the differences between their averages.

Table 7. Differences between averages of church population and actual participants

	Church Population	Actual Participants	Difference
Spiritual Habits	5.11	5.35	0.24
Disciple-Making Habits	4.56	4.83	0.27
Overall	4.84	5.09	0.25

The “overall” average difference increased by 0.25.

There was a significant discovery when the pre- and post-test DMS were compared. Those who participated in the curriculum scored themselves significantly lower on the post-test on two items. Table 8 lists the significant decreases.

Table 8. Significant average decreases of actual participants

Item	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
24. I am open to constructive criticism from fellow Christians.	5.21	5.0	-0.21
40. I know the names of most everyone in a Sunday morning worship service.	4.89	4.58	-0.32

I thought this information was fascinating. Why would there be significant average decreases among the same 19 persons after a six-week disciple-making program? These averages decreased because the pre-test and curriculum confronted these 19 participants. The project forced them to examine their attitude and behavior and therefore, they replied to the statement more accurately. It is human nature to think higher of oneself than reality. When tactfully confronted, mature Christians will seek God’s help to correct their attitude and behavior.

Although the differences listed in Tables 7 and 8 are interesting, the difference that matters most are between the 19 participants who completed both the pre- and post-test DMS. Table 9, on the next page, compares this data.

The t-test displayed a positive difference in the comparison between the two surveys (t Stat = 4.512639226.)⁸ Another way of interpreting this is that the two-tailed P value (4.569E-05) is smaller than 0.05 (or 5 percent), meaning that the null hypothesis can be rejected. The teaching intervention made a positive statistical difference in the lives of those who participated.

Additionally, the last page of the post-test DMS included opened-ended questions. Fourteen participants gave input to the project’s usefulness in equipping and motivating them to be more active disciple-makers. Moreover, they commented on

⁸ The absolute value of the t stat is larger than the t critical one-tail value of 1.679427393 and the t critical two-tail value of 2.014103389; thus, the teaching intervention made a positive statistical difference among the participants.

Table 9. Participants pre- and post-test t-Test results

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	Variable 1	Variable 2
Mean	5.087719298	5.162757437
Variance	0.295301118	0.253424428
Observations	46	46
Pearson Correlation	0.95686829	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	45	
t Stat	-4.512639226	
P(T<=t) one-tail	2.2845E-05	
t Critical one-tail	1.679427393	
P(T<=t) two-tail	4.569E-05	
t Critical two-tail	2.014103389	

specific aspects of the project they found most helpful and the changes they intended to make in life as a result of the project. The comments were very encouraging. A few of the comments are listed:

1. “We are all disciple-makers. I don’t think I ever thought that of myself before.”
2. I plan to “focus more on memorizing Scripture so that when the chance comes to speak with someone, I can recall the Word.”
3. The project “removed some fears about witnessing that I had.”
4. “I feel better equipped to witness to people and now I have more desire to do so.”

Conclusion

All three goals of the curriculum were met or exceeded expectations. The overall project was a success. The t-test showed a significant statistical improvement, and the comments on the post-test DMS were very encouraging. This core group of committed members is equipped to grow in their walk with Jesus and to help others to begin or grow in their walk with Jesus. May this project have a long-lasting impact on this community.

CHAPTER 5
EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

This chapter thoroughly evaluates the ministry project. First, it will assess the project's purpose. Next, it will evaluate the project's goals. Third and fourth, I will assess the project's strengths and weaknesses. Fifth, I will share my thoughts on what I would do differently. Next, this chapter will give theological reflections concerning the project. Lastly, I will share my personal reflections on the project.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose.

The purpose of the project was to develop disciples to be disciple-makers at Flintville First Baptist Church (FFBC) in Flintville, Tennessee. The project's purpose was precisely what FFBC needed. There are three reasons for the importance of this project. The three reasons are the biblical mandate, practical reasons, and potential growth.

The Biblical Mandate

If for no other reason, FFBC needed to develop disciple-makers because of the biblical mandate. The command to make disciples is explicit and repeated throughout the Bible. The Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 is the most explicit example of Christ's followers to "make disciples of all nations." Acts 1:8 is another explicit command to be Christ's "witnesses" who testify of Christ's life-changing power through the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 16, Christ makes the first mention of His church. His church will be victorious over the gates of hell, and through Christ's disciples and the gospel message, whatever they "bind on earth shall be bound in heaven" (Matt 16:19). Genesis

12, the first book of the Bible, tells us through God’s promise to Abraham, “all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen 12:3). Genesis 12 is speaking of the gospel message. It will bless all who trust in it. The command to be disciple-makers is explicit throughout the Bible and this mandate cannot be ignored.

Practical Reasons

Practically speaking, the church needs disciple-makers. FFBC is a congregation that is growing older demographically.¹ It was widely known that it was a strategy of the church to hire a younger pastor, like me, to relate to and attract younger families. Furthermore, as a result of the pre-test DMS, I discovered that many do not understand their biblical responsibility to multiply disciples. Few members are making conscious efforts to be disciple-makers. Many members are not regularly practicing spiritual disciplines to mature as Christ’s disciple. This ignorance is hindering the disciple-making potential because they are immature disciples themselves.² Practically, disciple-makers are much needed.

Potential Growth

Potential growth is a third reason for the project’s purpose. The Bible’s only plan for growth is for all of Christ’s disciples to be active in the disciple-making process. An entire church that focuses on making disciples can reach far more people than only the pastor or a select few “professionals” at the church. The potential impact in this community and around the world is that of exponential growth. The potential is tremendous.

¹ See table 1 in chapter 4 for demographic information about those who participated in the pre-test DMS.

² See tables 3 and 5 in chapter 4 for the lowest results in the pre-test DMS.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

The project's goals aided the purpose of the project nicely. The project had three goals: (1) assess the disciple-making habits and practices of regular attending adult Sunday school members; (2) develop a six-session curriculum that trains, equips, and convicts participants to make disciples as a way of life; and (3) teach regular attending adult Sunday school members to become disciple-makers. Each goal is evaluated in detail below.

Assess the Disciple-Making Habits and Practices of Adult Sunday School Members

The pre-test DMS sought to evaluate Sunday school attendees' spiritual habits and intentional efforts in disciple-making. The pre-test DMS exceeded expectations. The results were invaluable in determining the priorities of the curriculum. I had intended to focus much of the curriculum on witnessing and evangelism, but after receiving the results, it was apparent that a significant priority of the curriculum needed to focus on spiritual disciplines of disciple-makers.

The pre-test DMS was very helpful in displaying our church's areas of need, but an unexpected byproduct was its ability to reinforce doctrines that have taken root and flourished at FFBC.³ Even if I were not completing a ministry project at Southern Seminary, the pre-test DMS would be beneficial. Pastors often think they know the spiritual maturity of their congregations, but sometimes they are wrong. The DMS eliminated the need to guess this vital information. It reported the status of those who participated, both their pros and the cons.

I am also happy to report that the pre-test DMS reached a large percentage of the church. Initially, 64 adults and 7 youth completed the pre-test DMS. The results of anyone under 18 were not included in this research project, but I am pleased that 71

³ Tables 2 and 4 in chapter 4 display the highest results on the pre-test DMS.

persons completed the pre-test DMS in one Sunday. Additionally, three more adults completed the pre-test DMS before the curriculum was introduced. In all, 74 persons completed the pre-test DMS. The reason for the significance, I am convinced, is that the pre-test DMS alone confronted Sunday school attenders at FFBC. Whether they participated in the project or not, they assessed the quality of their spiritual maturity. The pre-test alone positively impacted the development of disciple-makers.

Develop a Six-Session Curriculum That Trains, Equips, and Convicts Participants to Become Disciple-Makers

Having the assessment of the pre-test DMS the next goal was to develop a curriculum to train, equip, and convict participants to become disciple-makers. This is an overwhelming task. Some who participated in the project have been Christians for more than five decades. Others were relatively new believers. Developing a curriculum that would reach such a diverse group proved challenging. Thankfully, two things helped develop a curriculum that was relevant to all who participated: the insight gained in chapters 2 and 3 of this ministry project and the professional panel who evaluated the curriculum.

Chapter 2 of the project forced me to exegete four passages relevant to disciple-making. Two of these passages became the focus of two different lessons. The depth of the exegesis in chapter 2 allowed me to go into great depth in those two lessons. Chapter 3 of this project challenged me to study leading authors' opinions on the topic of disciple-making. The insights I gained in chapter 3 became the main ideas of five lessons used in the curriculum. Dawson Trotman's "wheel" illustration⁴ proved essential in teaching the curriculum. I utilized the "wheel" illustration in five lessons. I also heard numerous compliments on the simplicity of the "wheel" illustration. Additionally,

⁴ See figure 1 in chapter 3 of this project.

several quotes listed in chapter 3 of this project were utilized in the six lessons. I found them too valuable not to share.

The professional panel proved very helpful. I must admit, I was not excited about the thought of four individuals evaluating my lessons. I thought that they might try to change “my style” or the priorities of my curriculum. In reality, they gave terrific insight. The expert panel were men whom I considered spiritually mature disciples of Jesus. Additionally, I considered each of them to be academically qualified to critique the lessons. Three of the men had earned Master of Divinity degrees, and the fourth has taught Sunday school and served as a deacon in FFBC for more than four decades.

The evaluation rubric proved helpful in gaining their appropriate insight. The part of the rubric that proved the most helpful was in revising the structure and organization of the lessons. Their revisions helped make the main idea and subpoints explicit in each lesson.

Teach Regular Attending Adult Sunday School Member to Become Disciple-Makers

The third goal of the project was by far the most enjoyable part of the entire ministry project. It is incredibly unusual for me to have six weeks of lessons wholly planned in advance. I thoroughly enjoyed being able to focus on teaching the curriculum and not having to plan each week. Once this Doctor of Ministry Degree is completed, I hope to prepare multi-week series, like this one, completely in advance.

The attendance of the curriculum exceeded the project’s goal. Obviously, I would have liked to have had better attendance, but the rationale of goal 3 in chapter 1 considered the third goal complete when at least 15 Sunday school attendees showed an improved positive statistical difference. Nineteen adults showed an improved positive statistical difference. As mentioned in chapter 4, 23 adults attended 3 or more lessons and were handed a post-test DMS. Nineteen adults returned their survey. Attendance did

fluctuate throughout the six weeks. The lowest adult attendance was 17 adults. The most adults present on a single evening was 25. I averaged 21 adults throughout the six weeks. There was some variation in the adults who attended; in other words, as many as 34 adults attended 1 session. This means that 11 adults did not attend at least 3 lessons.

The most encouraging results of the pre- and post-test DMS are notable.

Below, table 10 lists the largest increases.⁵

Table 10. Most significant DMS increases

Items	Pre-test (N=19)	Post-test (N=19)	Percent increase
7. I have a dedicated prayer time each day of the week.	4.84	5.11	5.4%
16. I strive to forgive others who have offended me.	5.05	5.32	5.2%
23. I feel a responsibility towards the Great Commission.	5.16	5.42	5.1%
27. I am growing in my relationship with God.	5.42	5.74	5.8%
35. I regularly carry gospel tracts with me.	3.47	3.95	13.6%
36. I utilize gospel tracts in my witnessing.	3.63	4.05	11.6%
37. I have found gospel tracts that I really like.	4.17	4.47	7.4%
48. I make or buy food for others outside of my immediate family.	4.42	4.78	8.1%
50. I am growing in my knowledge of disciple making.	5.21	5.47	5.1%

These nine items increased by at least 5 percent. The increase that I am pleased with most is item 7. Prayer is so vital to a Christian's spiritual maturity. I was happy to see it among the top increases. I only wish that it had resulted in a more significant increase. I would have liked to see item 6 among the top increases. Like prayer, daily Bible reading is essential to spiritual maturity. Daily Bible reading increased by 2.1 percent.

⁵ See appendix 7 for the complete results of the pre- and post-test.

However, daily Bible reading did end with a 5.16 result. On the spectrum of (1) “strongly disagree” to (6) “strongly agree,” this item ended relatively high. In fact, five of the nine “most significant increases” in table 10 ended with relatively high results. This bears considerable significance because it is more difficult to rank among the top percentage increases when the item began with a “high” pre-test result. For example, an item that began with a pre-test result of “1” and increased to a post-test result of “2” showed a 100 percent increase; whereas, an item that started with a “4” and increased to a “5” still increased by “1” point, but only displayed a 20 percent increase. Therefore, the 5+ percent increase of items 7, 16, 23, 27, and 50 yields more impressive results than a similar percentage increase that began with a lower pre-test score.

The increase in the three gospel tract items came as a result of emphasizing gospel tracts. Time did not allow for the priority emphasis I had intended to spend on Gospel tracts. I did, however, design, print, and produce a gospel tract during this time. Additionally, I designed and purchased 1,000 church invitation cards for members to hand out. One set of cards highlighted John 3:16 and the other set promoted www.truelife.org. This is a website that answers difficult questions about Christianity. It also shares the gospel in a meaningful way.

On the other hand, many items showed little or no significant change. Two items showed a significant decline. I discussed one possibility of the decline in chapter 4. I consider any significant change as basically good because people are changing their way of thinking. The project caused the change in thinking. However, I am dissatisfied that several answers showed little or no change. Ten items resulted in a 1 percent or less change. This could show a deficiency in the curriculum. This result is discussed further under the “what I would do differently” heading.

Strengths of the Project

There were several positive aspects to the project. Personally, this was my first

experience at tackling something of this magnitude. It has developed perseverance in me that I was not aware I possessed. It forced me to put my thoughts on paper, a discipline that I find tedious and difficult, but profitable. The primary purpose I decided to pursue this degree was to be held accountable to complete the work. The project served in holding me accountable and forced me to develop a higher degree of discipline. Additionally, the faculty of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was a tremendous strength. They were helpful, insightful, encouraging, and their love for learning and making disciples is contagious. They provided countless input and revisions that made this project something I am proud of.

The focus on mature discipleship was the most considerable strength of the entire project. The necessities of mature discipleship was clearly explained in detail throughout the project. The “wheel illustration” proved an invaluable asset in teaching mature discipleship. There is a reason this 70+-year-old illustration is still utilized. It is a great, simple way to communicate the essentials of following Christ. The church mentioned the “wheel” illustration frequently during the project and in the written responses on the post-test DMS.

The weekly memory verses were another strength of the project. It was exciting to see participants memorizing Scripture. They showed up that night having spent time throughout the week working on their memory verse. This discipline sparked an interest in church members and is still a priority focus on the church’s Sunday evening services. This discipline fulfills the command to think about things that are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and praiseworthy (Phil 4:8). Memorizing Scripture supports the discipline of meditating on Scripture. Now that God’s Word is written on the heart it can be thought about at any moment of the day.

The next strength of the project was the depth of the lessons. I had spent so much time exegeting the focal passages in chapter 2 that it made it easy to teach many aspects of a single Bible verse. As a result of the depth of understanding, I made the

focal passages of each lesson very concise. For example, the focal passage of the week that emphasized the necessity of daily Bible intake was John 17:17, “Sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth.” This simple, short verse has enormous implications. The depth of the lessons allowed me to keep only this short verse as the focal passage. Moreover, this short passage added to the practicality of participants memorizing their weekly verse.⁶ Additionally, I had gained numerous insights from other Christian leaders that helped add depth to the lessons.

Lastly, the number of lessons should be considered a strength of the project. There were a few different families that began experiencing drastic life-changes last fall that made it difficult for them to come to church at all. It saddened me that they could not be a part of the project. Additionally, others experienced sickness and unexpected circumstances that prevented them from being at every lesson. Therefore, participants could only handle six sessions. If it had lasted ten or more weeks, then attendance would have suffered even more. Additionally, it would have been taxing on the expert panel who committed to evaluate the lessons.

Weaknesses of the Project

There were several weaknesses in the project. I listed the six-week length of the project as a strength in the section above, but at the same time, it is also a weakness. It is unrealistic to expect a drastic change in spiritual maturity in so short a time. Jesus spent every day with His disciples for three years and still, they displayed significant moral failures after this time. Judas betrayed Jesus. Peter denied Him thrice. The other disciples abandoned Him at His arrest. It is impractical to expect drastic changes in a one-hour-per-week class which lasted six weeks. It takes a lifetime to produce spiritually mature disciples. This assessment does not negate the importance of the project. It

⁶ The other focal passages of each lesson were as follows: Matt 28:16-20; John 15:5; Phil 4:6; John 13:34-35; and Acts 1:8.

displays the need of the church to continue to prioritize disciple-making as a priority long after the six weeks have ended.

Second, there is only so much material that can be covered in six weeks. As noted in the “strengths” section above, the project did well emphasizing priorities of mature disciples. I considered these lessons priorities after analyzing the pre-test DMS. Initially, I had intended to spend more time emphasizing evangelism. Due to the need to prioritize spiritual maturity, there was less focus on evangelism. Lesson 6 focused on witnessing, but I had hoped to elaborate on techniques and practical ways to bring up Jesus Christ into a discussion. The priority on spiritual maturity made this emphasis weaker.

Third, after analyzing the pre-test DMS, I was puzzled by how high some church members ranked their answers. Some church members ranked themselves as high as possible on nearly every answer. I did not expect these high results. I think some different survey items could have caused them to examine their lives closer and see their need for a deeper commitment to the things of God. In short, the DMS could use some “tougher” statements that forced participants to examine their spiritual lives more carefully.

As examined in the next section, the results of the pre- and post-test DMS yielded ten items that displayed little change in their results. This fact could have exposed a weakness in the curriculum. Perhaps I should have taught more thoroughly or developed more careful survey items. This weakness is examined more carefully in the “what I would do differently” section.

Lastly, I utilized a few personal illustrations in the six-week curriculum. These illustrations served their purpose. They effectively communicated their point, but they also made it difficult for someone else to utilize the curriculum. I may have used the personal illustrations again, but I wish that I had given this issue more thought beforehand.

What I Would Do Differently

There is one issue that is easy to say how I would do differently. I would rethink the DMS. I would include statements that would challenge participants to examine their spiritual lives carefully. There were some areas of the DMS that yielded results that were too high. These “high results” contributed to the fact that ten items on the post-test DMS yielded little change. Below, table 11 displays the 10 items that yielded little change.

Table 11. DMS items that displayed little change

Items	Pre-test	Post-test	Percentage Increase
Spiritual Habits			
8. I am passionate about my relationship with God.	5.58	5.53	-0.9%
9. I strive to live by the moral principles found in the Bible.	5.68	5.68	0.0%
11. I regularly attend church.	5.74	5.79	0.9%
13. I use my gifts and talents to serve my local church.	5.32	5.26	-1.0%
14. I have someone with whom I can talk to about spiritual matters.	5.53	5.53	0.0%
25. I believe the Holy Spirit is active in my life.	5.63	5.63	0.0%
Disciple-Making Habits			
28. I pray for the lost regularly.	5.32	5.32	0.0%
38. I believe all Christians are responsible to play a role in completing the Great Commission.	5.63	5.58	-0.9%
43. I am intentionally patient, kind, and generous to my servers when eating at a restaurant.	5.42	5.39	-0.6%
44. I help my friends and neighbors with problems they have.	5.11	5.11	0.1%

Without exception, all these items scored high on the pre-test DMS. Item 44 yielded the lowest pre-test score; however, item 44 was still 0.02 higher than the average

score on the pre-test. These high pre-test results made it difficult to yield a significant percentage increase. For example, item 11 yielded a result of 5.74 on the pre-test. There is not enough room for a drastic change for this item on the post-test.

The changes that I might have made would look like this. In place of item 8, I might have said, “My relationship with God is my number one priority in life.” In place of item 11, I might have said, “I attend church services at least twice a week.” Less vague survey items are needed.

Second, I would consider extending the length of the curriculum by one or two weeks. This would have allowed time to share more practical ways to do evangelism. From the start, I had intended to focus on the aspect of witnessing. I concluded that teaching spiritually immature disciples how to witness would be ineffective. It troubled me that many scored themselves high on many of the items, but when it came to the most basic spiritual disciplines such as Bible intake and prayer, these same individuals scored themselves lower. Extending the study by a couple of weeks would have allowed for both personal, spiritual disciplines and evangelism to receive a higher priority. These extra weeks could have focused on the utilization of gospel tracts, developing and sharing one’s personal testimony, initiating gospel conversations, and more.

Theological Reflections

The most significant theological insight I gained from this project is the growing importance of Christ’s church. Born again believers make up the church, but the Scripture is unequivocal that the church belongs to Jesus Christ (Matt 16:18). Christ’s church is essential in the disciple-making process. It is God’s plan “A” for producing spiritually mature disciples; God has no plan “B.”

The focal passage for the lesson emphasizing a commitment to Christ’s church was John 13:34-35. In this passage, Jesus commands His disciples to love one another as He has loved them. Christ loved his disciples. He sacrificed for His disciples.

Ultimately, He laid down His life for His disciples. He was patient with them, and He personally invested in them. A Christian's local church is the platform where they are to practice loving one another. This platform gives most believers plenty of practice. It is not easy to love other church members. Surprisingly, church members give one another plenty of reason not to love each other, but this is precisely what it means to be Christ-like. Jesus loved His disciples, especially when they were unlovely. Peter denied Jesus three times, but in John 21, Jesus restored Peter to his place of influence and tasked him with the great responsibility of feeding Christ's sheep (John 21:15-17).

Christ's earthly churches are far from perfect, but they are essential in developing spiritual maturity. As elaborated in lesson 5 of this project, the New Testament gives disciples 59 "one another" passages. These passages tell Christians how to treat one another. The command to "love one another" is recorded 15 times in the New Testament. Elsewhere, Christians are told to be at peace with each other, honor one another, accept one another, wait for each other, be kind and tenderhearted toward one another, forgive one another, submit to one another, be truthful to one another, admonish and encourage one another, confess sins to one another, and many more. When a believer realizes his or her responsibility to carry out the "one another" commandments, he or she realizes the importance of the church. There is no other earthly platform where this is better carried out.

Personal Reflections

With this newfound priority of Christ's church, I am greatly grieved to learn of my negligence, and the church's negligence to practice church discipline. Many view church discipline as the means of putting out of the church those who are disliked by the church. This is far from church discipline's biblical purpose. The main goal of church discipline is not to put anyone out of the church, but to bring reconciliation to Christ's church. Sin creates divisions among Christ's church. It creates this division

exponentially when church discipline is neglected. Church discipline is the confrontation of deliberate sin. This is a loving action and is displayed by the Lord Jesus often throughout the N.T. If Christ confronted sin among those who identified as His disciples, should not Christ's followers also confront sin among those who call themselves Christians?

At the time I taught lesson 5 to the church, FFBC had 526 members on its role. The majority of these "members" have not been to church once in over five years. If we have 100 in Sunday school, then it is considered good attendance for that week. This sad reality causes me much grief. To be honest, I have not led our church to seek out any of the 526 members. I have failed to put into practice Christ's command to love "one another" as He loved me. I am hopeful that this is a project that I could lead FFBC to address soon. Like me, many members who attended lesson 5 were also alarmed that our membership is so large. It is my prayer that God would lead us to seek out these "lost sheep" of Christ and when all resources are exhausted, we have the courage to remove any names who have deliberately decided to never return to FFBC. Additionally, as a result of this personal reflection, I have signed up to attend the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board's "reclaim strategy" conference at the end of February. Its purpose is to outline a strategy for "reclaiming" churches' inactive members.

According to Scripture, church membership is meaningful. If we are willing to water down our membership with droves of individuals who never intend to meet with us, then we have lost a crucial aspect of church membership. I prayerfully anticipate that God will bless the church if we dare to carry out the biblical mandate of church discipline.

A second personal reflection I discovered through this project was my potential to accomplish more than I thought possible. It has taken me much longer than the typical three years to accomplish this degree. I took my first class in January of 2016. If I had stayed on track, I would have graduated in December of 2018. The four classes I took

were very challenging but rewarding. The course syllabus guided me and helped me to stay on track so that I completed my work on time.

I faced much more adversity staying on track with my ministry project. It seemed impossible to complete my classwork and project writing at the same time. After my project methodology class, I fell way behind. I was supposed to be working on chapter 2, but could not juggle classwork, ministry, family and project writing at the same time, or perhaps, I did not want to juggle all these at the same time. I kept telling myself that I would pick up my writing when I finished my seminars, but when I finished my seminars it had been so long since I had worked on my project, I did not know where to start. Moreover, the task seemed so large. For the longest time, I continued to neglect my ministry project. I contemplated dropping out. I rationalized dropping out with the comfort that I gained insight from my seminars that would make me a better pastor. In other words, even if I dropped out, my time was not wasted.

Today, as I write this personal reflection, I have a difficult time remembering why I picked my ministry project back up. For years now, I have met with a friend on Wednesday mornings for prayer. He recently finished a doctoral degree. He decided to make my doctoral degree his business. Every week, he would ask me if I had worked on it. For months, I told him, “no.” I despised hearing that question. After putting up with that question for an entire semester, I told him to stop asking me about it. I know he meant well, and he might have been one of the reasons I restarted working on it, but it seemed like once everyone left me alone about the issue, I picked it back up.

After 18 months of neglecting my project, I decided to attempt to complete only a small portion of chapter 2. After I completed this, I could drop out if I still wanted. Dividing chapter 2, and the subsequent chapters, into small portions made the difference. The task of completing the project still seemed overwhelming, but now I was on track to make progress. I only needed to divide the mammoth task up into small portions. During Thanksgiving of 2018, my wife wanted to make the 15-hour drive to

visit her parents and extended family in upstate New York. Perhaps it was my selfishness, but I did not desire to make the taxing trip. I bargained with her to give me her blessing to stay home so I could work on my project. In short, she made the trip with her sister, and I miraculously finished chapter 2. From then on, I would take breaks from writing my ministry project, but they never lasted 18 months. I continued to complete small portions of the project until I was able to see the light at the end of the tunnel. To be honest, I never dreamed I could complete the project, but by the grace of God, I am here today. I have learned that I can complete anything if I set my mind to it and divide the project into small, bite-size portions. I am proud of myself for having completed everything thus far. To God be the glory.

Conclusion

My final assessment of the ministry project is that I have equipped the Sunday school participants who attended the six-week curriculum to become disciple-makers. Time will tell if they were trained and motivated to accomplish this task. I pray that they will not follow my example of waiting 18 months to put these disciplines into practice. I will keep The Great Commission as a priority at FFBC. This imperative will serve as a constant reminder that members of FFBC are expected by God to become mature disciples of Jesus who dedicate their lives to making other mature disciples.

APPENDIX 1

DISCIPLE-MAKING SURVEY (DMS) (Pre-Project)

The Pre-Project survey was utilized to establish a baseline for curriculum development and Post-Project measurement.

DISCIPLE-MAKING SURVEY (DMS)
(Pre-Project)

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to develop disciple-makers of Flintville First Baptist Church. This research is being conducted by Josh Moran for the purpose of completing a ministry project. In this research, you will be asked to describe your personal and public practices and beliefs in regard to being a disciple of Jesus. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. By your completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Jesus was committed to making more than converts—He was committed to making disciples. The purpose for this survey is to evaluate the disciple-making habits and practices of Sunday school members of Flintville First Baptist Church. To remain anonymous, submit an identification number in place of your name. It is important to create an identification number so that your answers can be compared to a post-test after the teaching sessions on disciple-making have been completed.

Date: _____

Identification #: _____

Gender: _____

1. Do you consider yourself a Christian? Yes ___ No ___

2. Have you repented of your sins and confessed
Jesus as Lord? Yes ___ No ___

3. Are you married? Yes ___ No ___

4. What is your age in years?

___ A. 17 and younger

___ B. 18 – 24

___ C. 25 – 34

___ D. 35 – 44

___ E. 45 – 54

___ F. 55 – 64

___ G. 65 – 74

___ H. 75 and over

Directions: Please mark the appropriate box utilizing the following scale:

- SD = Strongly Disagree
- D = Disagree
- DS = Disagree Somewhat
- AS = Agree Somewhat
- A = Agree
- SA = Strongly Agree

	Spiritual Habits:	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
5.	I am interested in learning about God.						
6.	I spend time each day reading the Bible.						
7.	I have a dedicated prayer time each day of the week.						
8.	I am passionate about my relationship with God.						
9.	I strive to live by the moral principles found in the Bible.						
10.	I make an effort to be at peace with all people.						
11.	I regularly attend church.						
12.	I regularly attend Sunday school.						
13.	I use my gifts and talents to serve my local church.						
14.	I have someone with whom I can talk to about spiritual matters.						
15.	I have someone to help hold me accountable in my spiritual life.						
16.	I strive to forgive others who have offended me.						
17.	When I learn that I have disobeyed the teachings of the Bible, I try to correct my behavior.						
18.	I seek advice from mature Christians about the problems I encounter in life.						
19.	I like to worship and pray with other believers.						
20.	I pray with other believers regularly.						
21.	I feel I have a good understanding on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.						
22.	I feel confident in my abilities to lead someone to faith in Christ.						
23.	I feel a responsibility towards The Great Commission.						

24	I am open to constructive criticism from fellow Christians.						
25	I believe the Holy Spirit is active in my life.						
26	I see myself as loved and valued by God.						
27	I am growing in my relationship with God.						
	Disciple-Making Habits	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
28	I pray for the lost regularly.						
29	I see those different from me as loved and valued by God.						
30	I go out of my way to make friendships with someone I know is lost.						
31	I go out of my way to show the love of God to people I encounter.						
32	My neighbors and co-workers know that I am a Christian.						
33	I seek out opportunities to talk to others about spiritual matters.						
34	I feel confident in my abilities to teach other believers how to know God better.						
35	I regularly carry gospel tracts with me.						
36	I utilize gospel tracts in my witnessing.						
37	I have found gospel tracts that I really like.						
38	I believe all Christians are responsible to play a role in completing The Great Commission.						
39	I feel personally responsible to help the poor and helpless.						
40	I know the names of most everyone in a Sunday morning worship service.						
41	I intentionally greet visitors at church.						
42	I intentionally make conversation with people I do not know.						
43	I am intentionally patient, kind, and generous to my servers when eating at a restaurant.						
44	I help my friends and neighbors with problems they have.						
45	I know the names and family members of my closest neighbors.						
46	I am involved in missions efforts.						

47	I feel burdened to make visits to those I know are injured, sick, or homebound.						
48	I make or buy food for others outside of my immediate family.						
49	One day God will hold me accountable for how I have ministered to others.						
50	I am growing in my knowledge of disciple-making.						

APPENDIX 2
DISCIPLE-MAKING CURRICULUM

The six-week curriculum is included below.

Developing Disciple-Makers

Six-Week Curriculum

Lesson 1—Disciple-Making, Not an Option

Intro: See if you can follow along as I read this poem.

*Many, many years ago when I was twenty-three
I was married to a widow who was pretty as could be
This widow had a grown-up daughter who had hair of red
My father fell in love with her and soon they too were wed*

*This made my dad my son-in-law and really changed my life
For now my daughter was my mother, 'cause she was my father's wife
And to complicate the matter, even though it brought me joy
I soon became the father of a bouncing baby boy*

*My little baby then became a brother-in-law to dad
And so became my uncle, though it made me very sad
For if he were my uncle, then that also made him brother
Of the widow's grownup daughter, who was of course my step-mother*

*Father's wife then had a son who kept them on the run
And he became my grandchild, for he was my daughter's son
My wife is now my mother's mother and it makes me blue
Because although she is my wife, she's my grandmother too*

*Now if my wife is my grandmother, then I'm her grandchild
And every time I think of it, it nearly drives me wild
'Cause now I have become the strangest 'case you ever saw
As husband of my grandmother, I am my own grandpa¹*

Sadly, there is a similar confusion when trying to understand what exactly is a disciple of Jesus Christ. This six-week teaching session will make the point that a disciple of Jesus is not less than a disciple-maker. Let me restate this, a disciple of Jesus is many things, but at the very minimum, he or she is a disciple-maker. Is this what the Bible teaches? Let's briefly look at a passage of Scripture:

¹ Homer and Jethro, "I'm My Own Grandpa Lyrics," Lyrics on Demand, accessed August 29, 2019. <https://www.lyricsondemand.com/h/homerandjethrolyrics/immyowngrandpalyrics.html>.

Matthew 4:18–20 (ESV)

¹⁸ While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

Question: What did Jesus promise to make these two brothers? A. Fishers of men.

Question: What did the men have to do in order to become fishers of men? A. Follow Jesus.

Main idea: A disciple is someone who follows Jesus, and a follower of Jesus is a disciple-maker.

No one can be a disciple without following Christ. Likewise, no one can follow Christ without becoming a disciple-maker. J. I. Packer is a giant in Christ-like preaching and living. He says the following about Christ and disciple-making:

The commission to publish the gospel and make disciples was never confined to the apostles. Nor is it now confined to the church’s ministers. It is a commission that rests upon the whole church collectively, and therefore upon each Christian individually. All God’s people are sent to . . . ‘shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life.’²

The command to follow Christ and become disciple-makers is not optional. The two practices, disciple and disciple-maker, are one and the same. John Stott was another giant in the faith. In 2005 he was named among the top 100 most influential people in the world by Time Magazine.³ Listen to what he says about this issue: “if we are not taking an active part in Christian witness, we are not merely ineffective; we are positively in revolt against Christ.”⁴ Jesus says, “Whoever is not with me is against me” (Matt 12:30). No one can follow Jesus while revolting against Him.

The command to make disciples is given to every single follower of Christ (every single Christian). The most obvious place in Scripture where this is declared is a passage of Scripture commonly known as The Great Commission. Let’s take an in-depth look at the passage.

² J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 49.

³ “John Stott” in Wikipedia, Wikimedia Inc. 2019, accessed August 26, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Stott.

⁴ John R. W. Stott, *Personal Evangelism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1964), 7.

Matthew 28:16–20 (ESV)

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Point #1: You are not defined by your failures.

The first thing that should stick out to us in this passage is a reference to “the eleven disciples.” This is the first and only time there is a reference to “eleven” disciples in the book of Matthew. This should strike us as very unusual. Until this point in Matthew, there have been eight previous references to “the twelve” disciples. But here we hear of the eleven. We know why there are eleven disciples. It is because Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus for money and then took his own life. All of the twelve deserted Jesus on the night He was arrested. But what is interesting is that there was another of the twelve who also blew it in a similar fashion as Judas Iscariot. Who? It was Peter who denied Jesus three times when he was confronted by a slave girl. He denied Jesus in what is perhaps Jesus’ greatest time of need. Jesus was in the same location being falsely accused and wrongly beaten, and there Peter denied that he even knew who Jesus was, even calling down curses upon himself, if he was lying. The rooster crows and Luke 22:61 says the Jesus turns and looks at Peter, making eye contact with him at that point. We know how Peter feels about his moral failure. Three of the four gospels record that Peter rushes out of that location and weeps bitterly, but Scripture never tells us how Jesus feels at that moment when His most ardent, outspoken disciple denies Him.

The point is this. Both Judas and Peter committed significant moral failures. One wallows in self-pity and commits suicide. The other weeps bitterly, but afterward, repents and rejoins the remaining disciples. Peter is one of “the eleven.” He must be, if not, then the math does not add up. In our efforts to be followers and disciple-makers we all will fail. Your integrity is defined, not by your failure, but with what you do after your failures. Do not give up. Grieve, repent, pray, and keep following Jesus Christ. You are not defined by your past failures.

Point #2: The Great Commission is BIG!

The second point I want to make about The Great Commission passage is that Jesus instructs His disciples to meet Him upon a mountain in Galilee (v. 16). The Bible does not tell us exactly which mountain they met upon in Galilee; that is not important.

What is important is the fact that they are upon a mountain. This is important because all throughout the Bible God makes monumental declarations upon mountaintops.

Question: Can anyone think of any monumental Bible stories that were upon mountain tops?

Answers:

- Abraham offered Isaac upon a mountain in the land of Moriah.
- Moses ascended Mt. Sinai to converse with God and receive the 10 Commandments.
- Jesus preached the greatest sermon ever (Matt 5-7). What is this sermon called? A. The Sermon on the Mount.
- Where is Jesus transfigured before three of His disciples (Matt. 17:1-8)? A. upon the Mount of Transfiguration.
- The Ascension of Jesus takes place at the “mount called Olivet” (Acts 1:12).

Jesus is about to give the church its marching orders for millennia to come. It is no surprise that The Great Commission takes place upon a mountain in Galilee. The Great Commission is Big!

Point #3: Jesus possesses the power to Commission his disciples.

Verse 18 is critical to understanding The Great Commission.

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

The resurrected Jesus is different from the Jesus who walked the earth for 30+ years. The Jesus who walked the earth was limited by His humanity. As you read through the Gospels you will learn that the Jesus who walked the earth was hungry, thirsty, and at times he was tired. In Matthew 24:36 Jesus admits that He does not know the hour of His second coming. But after the resurrection, all of this changes. Jesus is no longer bound by His humanity. All authority, in heaven and on earth has been given to Him. He now knows the hour of His second coming. He no longer hungers, thirsts, or grows weary. None of us will suffer from these conditions after we receive our resurrected bodies. It is because of this newly realized authority that Jesus can give the church its marching orders for millennia. What are these marching orders?

Point #4: The primary purpose of The Great Commission is to make disciples.

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

In both the English language and the original Greek language, verses 19 through 20a are one sentence. In the original Greek this one sentence contains only one action verb.

Action verbs are important because they tell us what we must do. The English language is a little confusing because when it translates this sentence from the Greek to the English it gives us two action verbs. In English, the two action verbs are “go” and “make disciples.” In Greek, the word “go” is not a verb; it is something called a participle. I will talk more about participles in a moment, but for now I want you to understand that the only main verb in this sentence is the command to “make disciples.” The main thrust of The Great Commission is for disciples of Jesus to make more disciples of Jesus. Followers of Christ are disciple-makers. It is our primary objective as a church. It is the main objective of The Great Commission. God forgive us if we have made anything else the priority of the church. Church forgive me, for not having always made this, the church’s main priority. There have been times where I have failed to keep disciple-making as the main priority of this church. It is time for a priority reset. It is time to get this right. Too much is at stake. The rightful worship of God and the souls of men and women hang in the balance. Followers of Christ are disciple-makers.

Charles Spurgeon slaps complacent Christians in the face with the following quote:

*Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you are not saved yourself. Be sure of that.*⁵

We cannot glide through life without a concern for other human beings, especially their souls. We must attempt to make disciples of all nations.

The Great Commission contains 3 participles. These participles describe what it means to be a disciple-maker. The word “go” in English is a verb, but in the Greek, it is a participle. This word tells us how to make disciples. What must someone do to make disciples? They must “go!” That is, they must be intentional about disciple-making. God wants His disciples to purposely talk about Him with others. We will talk more about how to do this in the weeks to come, but I want us to understand that this is something we need to do intentionally.

The second participle that describes what it means to make disciples is the word “baptizing.” God wants his disciples to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and to display that spiritual baptism by being physically baptized with water. When the lost are saved, their first step of obedience to Jesus Christ is following His command to participate in believer’s baptism. A professing Christian who purposely neglects water baptism,

⁵ C. H. Spurgeon and Tom Carter, *Spurgeon at His Best: Over 2200 Striking Quotations from the World’s Most Exhaustive and Widely-Read Sermon Series* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 69.

willfully rebels against the instructions of Jesus Christ. This person needs to think long and hard about whether he or she is genuinely Jesus' follower.

The third participle in this verse is the word "teaching." All disciples of Jesus require teaching.

Question: Look at the verse and tell me what the subject matter is? What are disciples in need of being taught according to v. 20? A. They are to be taught to observe the commandments of Jesus. That is a lifelong process. There are two aspects to teaching the commandments of Jesus. We can teach Christians the commandments of Jesus, and they mature. But can we teach non-Christians the commandments of Jesus? Yes!!! The commandment of Jesus that we teach non-Christians is that they need to believe in Jesus, repent of sin, and be saved. We will talk more about the commandments of Jesus in the weeks to come, but for now, we must understand that a disciple is someone who follows Jesus and that a follower of Jesus is a disciple-maker, fishers of men.

Question: What is the main verb of The Great Commission? A. Make disciples.

Question: What are the three participles of the Great Commission? A. Go, baptizing, and teaching.

The Great Commission ends with a divine promise: "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." This divine promise assures us of his divine aid. His aid is necessary to complete such an enormous task. Keep disciple-making the primary task of the church. Christ will aid us in this work.

Memory verse—Week 1: Matthew 28:18-20 "18And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Developing Disciple-Makers

Six-Week Curriculum

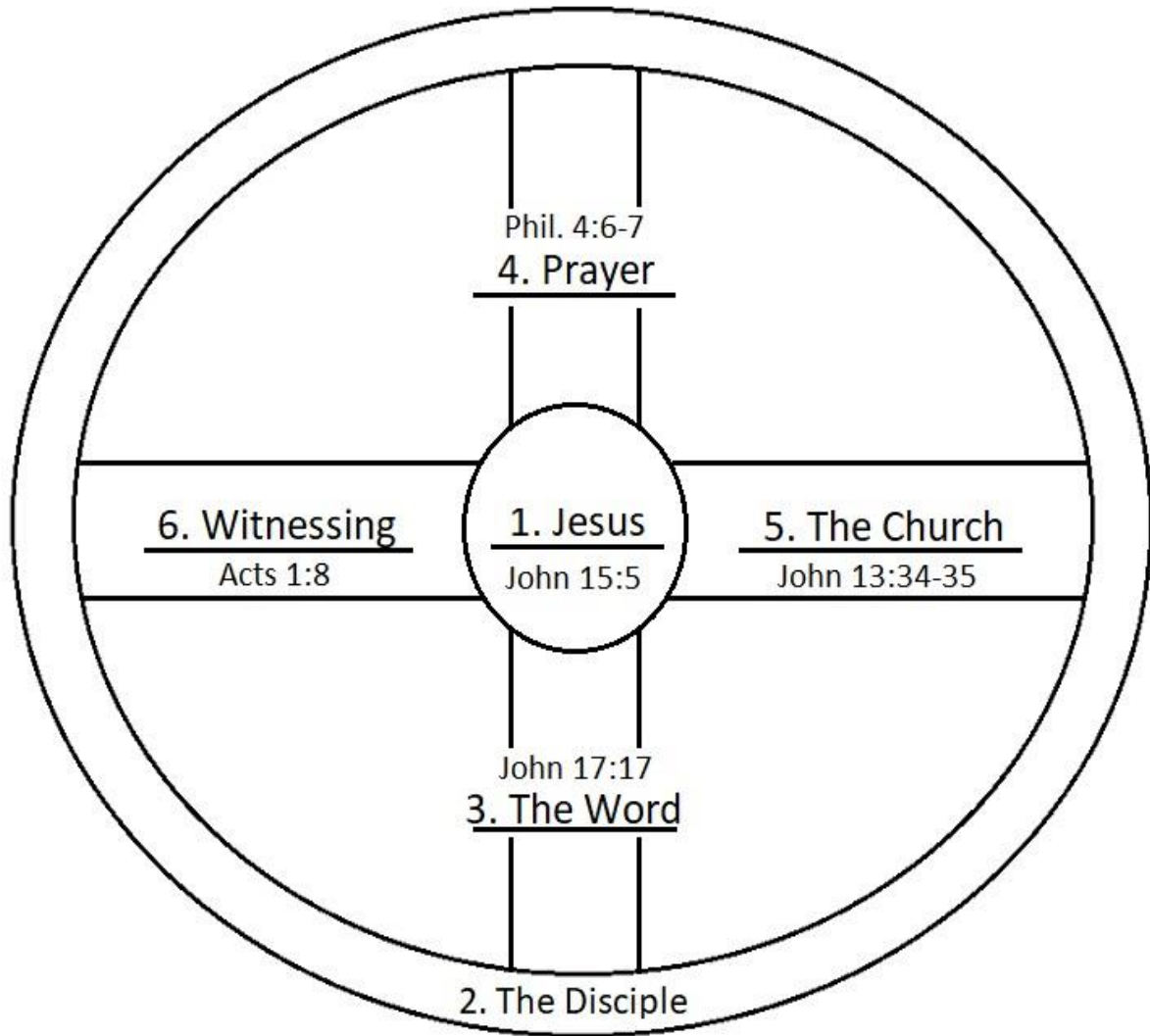
Lesson 2—Christ is the Center in the Life of a Disciple-Maker.

(Before Lesson 2 is introduced, distribute the handout “The Disciple-Maker Wheel with blanks.”)

Intro: When Christy and I were dating, we loved to spend time together. Some couples like talking on the phone or texting, but that was not us. If I had spare time, I wanted to spend it with this pretty little “thang.” There was a point in our relationship where we both felt like each other were becoming a distraction to our relationship with God. God is supposed to be our number one priority. He has given us dating or courtship to be a blessing to us, but that relationship was never meant to take God’s place. There was a point in our dating relationship where we felt like that was happening. Our solution was to fast from one another. We were not breaking up, but we were ceasing communication with one another for one week. It was a long week. I was glad that I had football practice most days of the week to keep me busy. Day seven was coming to an end. I was watching the clock. At midnight, I gave Christy a call. As far as I was concerned, our fast was over. I brought her a jar of dill pickles, one of her favorites, then spent the next couple hours enjoying her company. We had received a valuable reminder to keep our relationship with God as our top priority.

(Refer to the handout). The following illustration will be utilized for the remaining five lessons to help us understand the essential aspects of a disciple-maker: “The Disciple-Maker Wheel.” There is nothing new about the elements of Disciple-making. These principles are not flashy or exciting. They are the tried and proven teachings which develop individuals into disciples who make disciples.

The Disciple-Maker Wheel



There are six parts to the wheel pictured above. At the center of the wheel is the hub. The hub is the foundation of the wheel. The wheel derives its power from the hub. If the connection to the hub is weak, the wheel will falter and break. The hub is the most critical part of the wheel. The second part is the outer wheel. The outer wheel is where the rubber meets the road. It is where progress occurs. The outer wheel represents the disciple's influence. The outer wheel must be connected to the hub for support and power. In this illustration there are four spokes that connect the outer wheel to the hub. These spokes are the four main priorities of all disciple-makers. They will be expounded upon in the weeks to come.

Main idea: Jesus must be the center of our lives.

(Have the participants write “Jesus” in the center of the hub at the space marked #1. Have participants write down “The Disciple” at the space marked #2.)

John 15:5 (ESV)

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

(Have the participants write “John 15:5” under the word “Jesus” in the “hub” of the wheel.)

The command of John 15:5 is to abide in Jesus. “Remain” or “dwell” are other words used in the place of “abide.” This conveys that abiding is a continual practice. Disciple-makers are not produced by making a commitment to follow Christ only one time in life. Jesus tells the multitudes they must pick up their cross *daily* and follow Him (Luke 9:23). His Disciples must abide with Him.

Point #1: Loving Jesus enables disciples to abide in Him.

Jesus makes it explicitly clear; the greatest commandment in all the Bible is the command to love God with all of one’s heart, soul, and mind (Matt 22:37-38). Jesus is God, and loving Him creates a desire in us to abide in Him just as I desired to be with Christy. Love Christ and you will want to abide with Him.

We think about those in this world that we love. For example, we think about a spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, mom, dad, children, grandchildren, or someone else. We know we love them because we are thinking about them. Think about Christ and you will want to abide with Him.

We long to please those in this world we love. We love to see them smile and laugh. Can you remember what it was like to see the excitement of your young children or loved one on Christmas morning? We think about things that will make them happy. We take actions that will display our love for those close to us. If we love Christ, then we will also display our love for Him.

(Begin a discussion by asking the following question.)

Question: What are some ways we can display our love for Christ?

(The discussion should naturally lead to the second point of this lesson.)

Point #2: Love for Christ is displayed by keeping His commandments.

The one who abides in Jesus will bear fruit. Fruit is obedience to Christ.

I want to make a crucial distinction right now because I think this point can be easily misconstrued. The Bible does not teach that keeping Christ's commandments is all that is needed to love Him. Please listen very carefully. Disciples cannot love Jesus by choosing to follow a set of rules. Many *would-be* disciples have misinterpreted this truth and have fallen into the trap of legalism. Legalism believes that Christ's love can be earned by adapting someone's behavior to a certain moral level. This person has put the cart before the horse. This belief system is faulty and leads to bitter, disillusioned, and disappointed *so-called* disciples. Point #2 is repeated throughout the New Testament, but the most obvious place it is displayed is in the following verse:

John 14:15 (ESV)

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

This verse clearly stipulates—love for Christ results in a life that keeps His commandments. Love for Christ is evidenced by a desire to display love through obedience to His commandments. This verse does not say, "prove your love for me by keeping my commandments." That is legalism. It is a works-based salvation, and it is not biblical.

Obedience to Jesus' commandments is evidence that you love Him. The person who has no concern for the commandments of Christ does not love Him. The person who does not love Jesus does not desire to abide with Him. This person does not and cannot bear any fruit. Apart from Christ, this individual does nothing because he or she is not abiding in Jesus. The person who does not love Christ is not His disciple. Unbelievers do not begin a relationship with Christ by attempting to follow His commandments. They begin a relationship with Jesus by loving Him. Do you see the difference?

The main thrust of this lesson is this:

Point #3: Grow in your love for Jesus.

This point brings us to a great question: "How do I grow in my love for Jesus?" Just as I grew in my love for my wife by spending time with her, we can grow in our love for Jesus by learning more about Him: who He is; what He stands for; what He has already done for us; what He will do for us in the future. We each can grow in our love towards Christ by learning about His great love for us.

1 John 4:19 (ESV)

We love because he first loved us.

I want to end our time together by reading a handful of passages that remind us of the love God.

- 1 John 3:16 (ESV) By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.
- 1 John 4:9–10 (ESV) In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
- John 3:16 (ESV) “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
- Romans 5:8, 10 (ESV) but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.
- Psalm 8:3–9 (ESV) When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? ⁵ Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. ⁶ You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, ⁷ all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, ⁸ the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. ⁹ O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

God loves you! Do not let His love for you go unreturned.

Memory verse—Week 2: John 15:5 (ESV) “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. “

Developing Disciple-Makers

Six-Week Curriculum

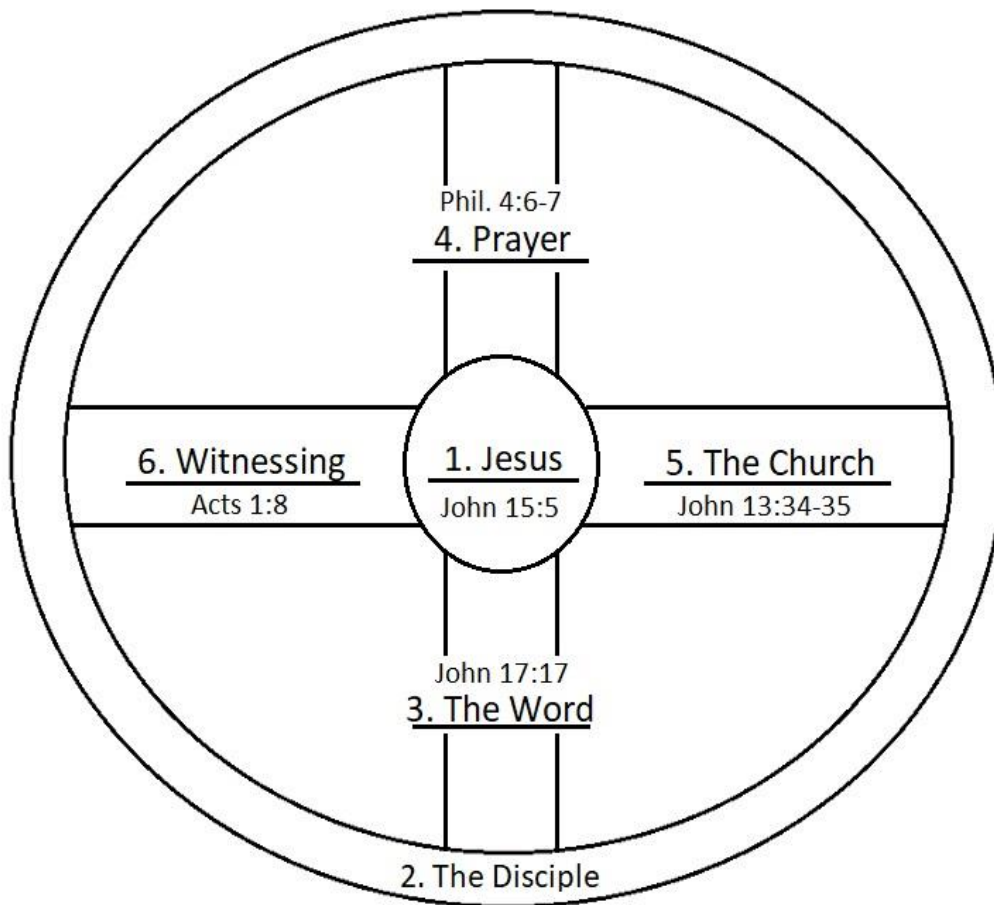
Lesson 3—The Word, God’s Agent of Sanctification.

(Before Lesson 3 is introduced, distribute an up-to-date handout “The Disciple-Maker Wheel with blanks” and the “Hand” illustration.)

Intro: Have you ever noticed how children like affirmation for their accomplishments. One little boy was no exception to the rule. He said to his father, “Dad, let’s play darts. I’ll throw and you say, ‘wonderful!’” How can we receive affirmation that our spiritual lives are headed in the right direction? Today’s lesson is foundational in becoming the disciple that God affirms in His Word.

(Review the handout). Last week we looked at how Jesus must be the center of the disciple’s life. This week we will look at the first spoke that connects the disciple to Jesus Christ.

The Disciple-Maker Wheel



Main idea: The Word of God is the foundational spoke that connects us to Christ.

(Have the participants write “The Word” in the bottom spoke marked #3.) Our passage of focus comes from John 17. John 17 is known as Jesus’ high priestly prayer.⁶ This chapter gives us 26 precious verses of Jesus praying for Himself (vs. 1-5) and His disciples (vs. 6-26). It is a priceless picture of the intimacy between Jesus and the Father. The verse most relevant for this lesson is Jesus’ prayer for sanctified disciples:

John 17:17 (ESV)

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

(Have participants write down “John 17:17” above “The Word”).

Point #1: Jesus’ disciples grow in sanctification.

The word “sanctify” is a vital aspect of spiritual maturity. This Greek word used here is the word “hagios” and is translated into English in several different ways: “be holy, holiness, holy one, saints, consecrate, consecration, sanctify or sanctification.”⁷ Context determines the specific word usage. The broad meaning of this single word is the process by which someone is brought into relationship with the holy or attains the likeness of the holy.⁸ In layman’s terms, Jesus is praying for His disciples to be made holy, that is, to be more like Jesus. This is a lifelong process. Disciples will never wholly achieve Christ-like holiness this side of heaven. However, they ought to be growing in sanctification. It is normal and expected that Christ’s disciples grow in their relationship with Christ and grow in their likeness of Christ. I remind you of our memory verse from last week. John 15:5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” The disciple of Jesus will bear much fruit. Sanctification is this fruit. Jesus’ disciples grow in sanctification.

Point #2: Truth brings sanctification.

Jesus is clear; the agent that sanctifies disciples is “truth.” Verse 17 says, “sanctify them in the *truth*.” Some translations say, “sanctify them *by* the truth.” The truth Jesus has in mind is more than an intellectual knowledge of what is true and false. Intellectual knowledge will not bring about the sanctification Jesus is praying for. The truth that

⁶ S. C. Agourides, “The ‘High Priestly Prayer’ of Jesus,” *Studia Evangelica* 4 (Berlin: Akademie, 1968): 137–43.

⁷ K. E. Brower, “Sanctification, Sanctify,” ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., *New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 1057.

⁸ Brower, “Sanctification,” 1058.

brings sanctification is an experiential knowledge; that is, it is something which exists inside you. It is a part of you. It is the difference between knowing certain facts intellectually and believing certain facts to be true or false through experience. When one experientially believes things to be true, he or she will act upon those beliefs every time. In this case, the disciple will act upon it even amid dire circumstances like fear, risk, and tribulation. For example, experiential truth is displayed by Job after he had lost everything. He says in Job 13:15: “though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” Even if God were to require Job’s life, still Job says he would trust Him. The truth had sanctified Job, and it affected the way he lived, even in adverse circumstances.

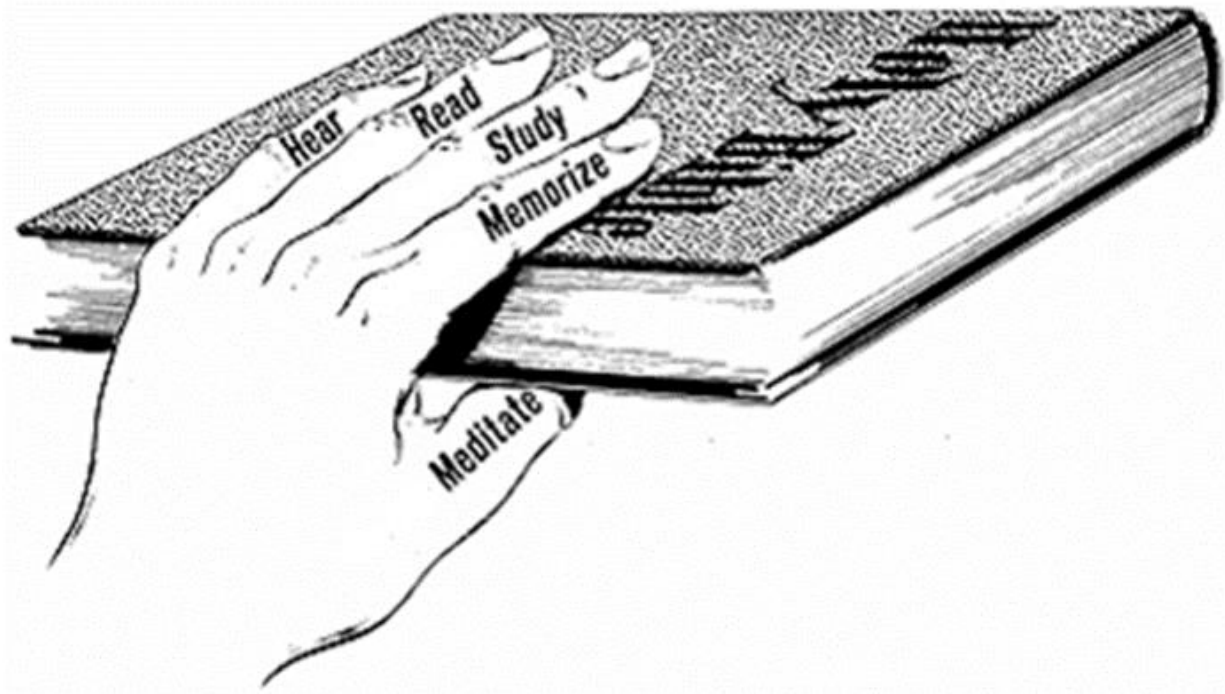
Illustration—trust fall: (ask for or select a volunteer. A member of the youth group is usually a good candidate. Have the participant come to the front of the room. Ask the volunteer if he or she is willing to trust you. This exercise will display whether or not their claim to trust you is only head knowledge or experiential knowledge. Instruct the volunteer to face away from you and hold their arms out. Then, without moving their feet, instruct the volunteer to fall backward. Catch him or her under the arms at the lowest position so that you keep him or her from harm. Most participants will move their feet on the first try out of fear for self-preservation. This fear proved what the participant truly believed. His or her claim to trust you was not something the volunteer truly believed but only thought he or she believed. If the volunteer succeeded in *not* moving his or her feet, recognize the participant’s claim as experiential truth, that is, it existed on the inside of the person.)

The truth we each need in order to be sanctified goes deeper than intellectual knowledge. It must be truth that is on the inside of us, and it must be a part of us in every circumstance. This truth yields sanctification.

Point #3: God’s Word is Truth.

After Jesus prays for his disciples to be sanctified in the truth, He informs us how to access truth. He says in His prayer, “your word is truth.” God’s Word, the Bible, is the truth that brings about sanctification. Psalm 119:160 says, “The sum of your word is truth.” The “sum” of something is a math term. When one adds numbers together, whatever they equal is labeled their sum. The psalmist is saying that if we were to add every verse in the Bible together, they would equal truth. The disciple of Jesus Christ must be a student of the Bible. The Bible connects us to Jesus Christ and sanctifies us. The following “Hand” illustration⁹ is five ways that disciples can apply the Bible to their lives (refer to the handout).

⁹ Emery Nester, “The Hand Illustration—First Finger: Hearing,” Bible.org (October 2006): 22,



1. The first way to learn and apply the Bible is by hearing it. Multiple Bible verses command the disciple to “hear” Scripture. Luke 11:28, Romans 10:17, and 1 Timothy 4:13 are a few of the verses that emphasize the hearing of Scripture. The most common place to hear Scripture read and exegeted is in the local Bible-believing church. Also, audio versions of Scripture are plentiful today. Additionally, biblically sound audio or video teachings are also plentiful. Flintville FBC has a membership to rightnowmedia.org for just this purpose. Always make the hearing and teaching of God’s Word a priority in your life.
2. The second way a disciple can learn and apply truth is by reading God’s Word. Paul said it best in 2 Timothy 3:16. If the Scriptures are “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,” then we should know what they say. *Christianity Today* and the Gallup Poll conclude that “no factor is more influential in shaping a person’s moral and social behavior than regular Bible reading.”¹⁰ How often is “regular Bible reading?” British preacher John Blanchard explains,

We only have to be realistic and honest with ourselves to know how regularly we need to turn to the Bible. How often do we face

accessed May 10, 2019, <https://bible.org/seriespage/22-hand-illustration-first-finger-hearing>.

¹⁰ Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991), 32-33.

problems, temptation and pressure? Every day! Then how often do we need instruction, guidance and greater encouragement? Every day! To catch all these felt needs up into an even greater issue, how often do we need to see God's face, hear his voice, feel his touch, know his power? The answer to all these questions is the same: every day! As the American evangelist D. L. Moody put it, "A man can no more take in a supply of grace for the future than he can eat enough for the next six months, or take sufficient air into his lungs at one time to sustain life for a week. We must draw upon God's boundless store of grace from day to day as we need it"¹¹ (emphasis original).

If God is to be a priority in anyone's life, they must make time to read His Word. If someone is too busy to read the Bible daily, then his or her priorities are out of order. Donald Whitney explains, "Just as we schedule times to eat our physical food, so we must do the same for our spiritual food."¹² The Disciple must make the daily reading of the Bible a priority.

3. The third way to apply God's Word is through study. Studying the Bible involves comprehending the meaning of the Scriptures. "Comprehension" is the keyword for study. One can hear and read the Bible without comprehension. Jerry Bridges says this about studying: "reading gives us breadth, but study gives us depth."¹³ Richard Foster defines the term: "study is a specific kind of experience in which through careful attention to reality, the mind is enabled to move in a certain direction."¹⁴ Biblical study leads the student in the direction of sanctification. Jesus tells His disciples to abide in the Word so that they may know the truth and be set free by the truth (John 8:31-32). Richard Foster elaborates on this verse, "good feelings will not free us. Ecstatic experiences will not free us. Getting 'high on Jesus' will not free us. Without a knowledge of the truth, we will not be free."¹⁵ Taking the time and effort to comprehend the meaning of Scripture is "abiding" in Christ's Word; it brings freedom. It leads to experiential knowledge. It yields sanctification.
4. The fourth way to apply The Word is through memorization. The spiritual discipline of memorizing Scripture unlocks a vast treasure room that enriches

¹¹ John Blanchard, *How to Enjoy Your Bible* (Colchester, England: Evangelical Press, 1984), 104.

¹² Donald S. Whitney, *Ten Questions to Diagnose your Spiritual Health* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2001), 38.

¹³ Jerry Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1983), 51.

¹⁴ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1998), 63.

¹⁵ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*.

- one's spiritual health. It is tedious work, but it is valuable work. Scripture explicitly teaches that hiding God's word in our heart keeps us from sin (Ps 119:105). Jesus quoted Scripture when he faced temptation in the wilderness. He did not have a Bible with Him. How did He quote Scripture? He had it memorized. He battled His temptations with God's Word hidden in His heart (Matt 4). In Ephesians 6:17, Paul characterizes God's Word as a soldier's sword. A soldier uses his sword for both defense and offense. When God's Word is readily available in the disciple's heart, it will defend that soldier of Christ from temptation, and it can be used to gain ground offensively through witnessing and counseling. Donald Whitney lists four practical applications to memorizing Scripture: it supplies spiritual power; it strengthens one's faith; it aids in witnessing and counseling; and it is a means of personal guidance.¹⁶ Scripture memorization is hard work, but it is possible. If you can memorize your birthday, phone number, and address, then you can memorize Scripture.
5. The final way to apply the Scriptures to life for sanctification is through meditation. Christian meditation is a simple concept. It is not difficult or mystical. All you have to do is ponder or think about Scripture. Dietrich Bonhoeffer says to "accept the Word of Scripture and ponder it in your heart. . . . That is meditation."¹⁷ One can ponder Scripture when you hear it, read it, study it, or memorize it. There is a reason that the thumb is labeled meditation in our "hand" illustration. Of the five fingers which finger is most important for gripping something? It is the thumb. Christian meditation will bring about sanctification in a disciple's life better than any other discipline. We could practice all other spiritual disciplines, but if we fail to meditate on Scripture our grasp on God's Word will be weak. Think about the Word of God.

Conclusion:

A disciple of Jesus is someone who is growing in sanctification. Experiential truth is the agent God uses to bring about our sanctification. God's Word is that experiential truth. The disciple of Jesus must make it a priority in life.

Memory verse—Week 3: John 17:17 "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth."

¹⁶ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 42-43.

¹⁷ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Way to Freedom* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 59.

Developing Disciple-Makers

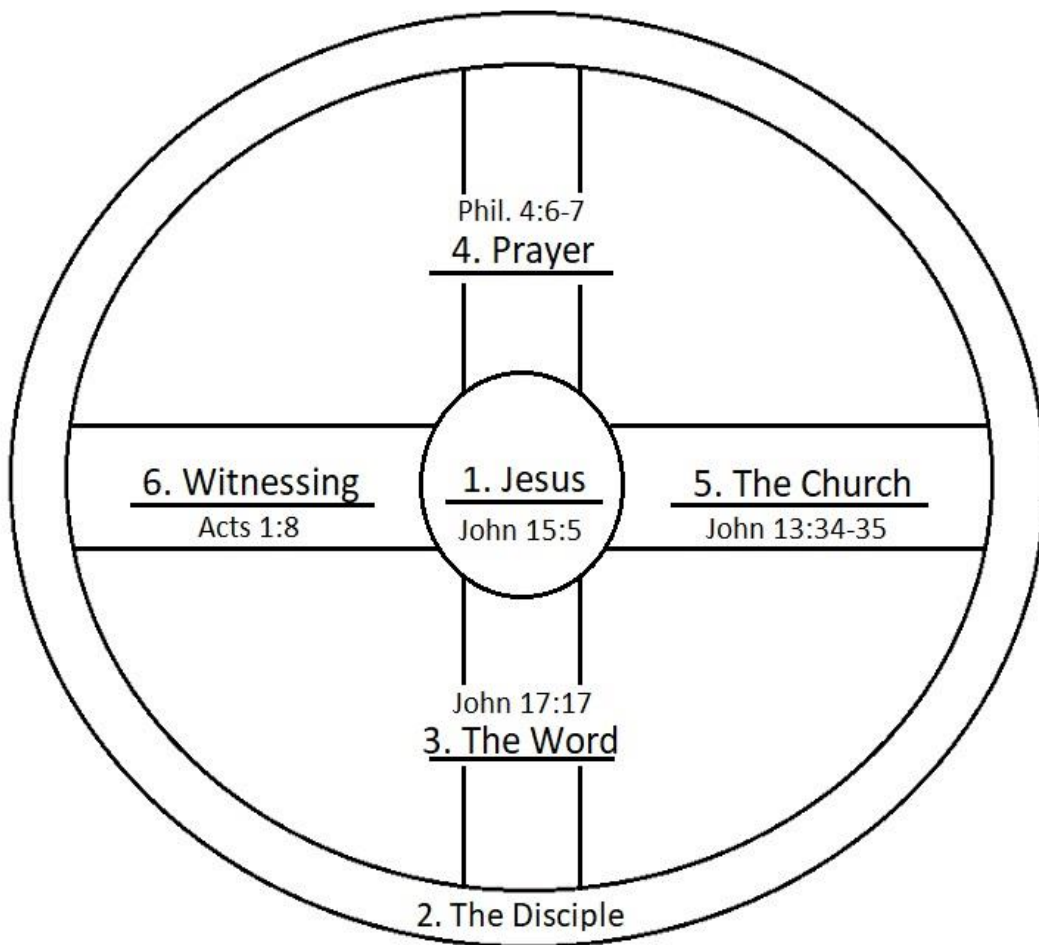
Six-Week Curriculum

Lesson 4—Prayer, The Christian’s Source of Power.

(Before Lesson 4 is introduced, distribute an up-to-date handout “The Disciple-Maker Wheel with blanks.”)

(Review the handout). So far we have learned that a disciple of Jesus is a disciple-maker. The disciple-maker must make Jesus the center of his or her life. The Word (the Bible) is foundational in connecting us to Jesus.

The Disciple-Maker Wheel



Main idea: Prayer is the disciple’s source of strength.

(Have the participants write “Prayer” in the top spoke marked #4.) Philippians 4:6 is our passage of focus tonight. The Apostle Paul wrote these precious words.

Philippians 4:6 (ESV)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

(Have participants write down “Phil 4:6” above “Prayer.”)

Point #1: Prayer matters.

Prayer is a fundamental concept in Christianity. It is simply defined as “communication with God.”¹⁸ You do not have to be highly intelligent to find meaning in prayer. Nor do you have to be highly influential or successful to engage the Creator in prayer. Prayer is meant for all people no matter their social status, financial status, intellect, or any other category.

There is supernatural empowerment when God’s people pray. In other words, prayer matters. In the verse above, we are instructed to be free from anxiety. This commandment is a tall order. There are plenty of things in this world that cause anxiety: sickness; disease; birth defects; financial issues; immorality; violence; cancer; war; injustice; slavery; human trafficking; moral compromise; political instability; governmental abuse; accidents; marriage; divorce; death; separation; and the list goes on. We are told not to be anxious about any of these. We are even instructed not to be anxious about these things for our loved ones. Yes, parents are instructed to be free from anxiety even concerning their children. The enormous question is “how?” This passage makes it clear; the answer is “prayer.” Prayer matters.

There is supernatural power available in prayer. The problem is that the majority of disciples neglect prayer; and therefore, neglect the available power. The great missionary Hudson Taylor said,

The prayer power has never been tried to its full capacity. If we want to see mighty works of Divine power and grace wrought in the place of weakness, failure and disappointment, let us answer God’s standing challenge, “Call to me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know” (Jeremiah 33:3).¹⁹

Do not neglect the importance of prayer.

Point #2: Pray about everything.

¹⁸ Leslie T. Hardin, “Prayer,” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

¹⁹ Kirk Cameron and Ray Comfort, *The School of Biblical Evangelism: 101 Lessons: How to Share Your Faith Simply, Effectively, Biblically . . . the Way Jesus Did* (Gainesville, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2004), 280.

Philippians 4:6 commands the Christian to pray about everything. Multiple passages in the New Testament instruct the disciple to pray continually (Rom. 12:12, 1 Thes 5:17, Eph 6:18, Col 4:2, Heb 13:15, and others). Prayer is available to Christians at any moment of any day. Our main problem is we compartmentalize our Christian faith. We think we should pray only at certain portions of the day or week. For example, we should pray when at church, during a devotion, before a meal, or when facing a crisis. Yes, we should pray at these moments, but God is trying to train the Christian to live a life that communicates with Him about “everything” the believer encounters throughout the day. Praying about “everything” is living life as if Jesus Christ is with us at every moment of the day, because He is.

In addition to “praying continually,” we each should follow the example of Jesus and have a daily time devoted to prayer. Two things prevent Christians from a devoted, daily prayer time. The first obstacle is business. Americans, in general, overcommit themselves. We are busy people with much to accomplish every day. We hear this teaching and think, “how can I fit something else into my already busy schedule?” Many will dismiss the idea as “impossible.” They are too busy. These people have their priorities out of order because they do not understand the importance of prayer. The following story will illustrate the importance of prayer:

A man was in bad need of work. He took a job as a lumberjack falling trees. He was very appreciative to have a job and wanted to work at it with all his might. The first day he fell ten trees. The second day he fell eight trees. The third day he fell only six trees. The pattern continued until the best he could do was fall two trees a day. He said, “I don’t understand. I am working just as hard now as when I began. I just cannot seem to do any better. A co-worker asked, “when was the last time you sharpened your ax?” He replied, “I do not have time to sharpen my ax. I am too busy chopping down trees.” Over time his ax had grown dull and would not slice like it did when it was new. If he would only take the time to take care of his equipment, he would have accomplished much more with less effort.

The same is true with prayer. When we dedicate a portion of our day towards prayer, we are taking the time to sharpen our efforts for the rest of the day. The God of the universe is in control of every effort we engage in throughout the day. When we make Him a priority every day, He promises to bless our efforts (Matt 6:33). The “busyness” excuse is a lack of faith in God’s promises. It is a lack of faith in His sovereign control over the universe. Make the time to sharpen your ax of faith through daily, dedicated prayer.

The second obstacle that prevents disciples from having a daily prayer time is a lack of teaching. Prayer is a learned skill. The disciples petitioned Jesus, “teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1). Whenever someone starts something new, they have a lot to learn. The same is true with prayer. Most Christians have heard stories of individuals spending hours in prayer. They are challenged to spend lengthy amounts in prayer themselves. Christians will bow their head and pray about everything they can think about, look at the clock, and realize only three or four minutes have passed. This is a discouraging experience. In reality, it is common for disciples to grow discouraged in their attempts to have devoted prayer. When this happens most individuals think that the problem is with themselves, but this is not true. The problem is that no one has taught them how to pray.

Without a doubt, the best way to pray is to have Scripture opened up in front of you. Many mature Christians agree with this conclusion. John Piper admits,

If I try to pray for people or events without having the word in front of me guiding my prayers, then several negative things happen. One is that I tend to be very repetitive. . . . I just pray the same things all the time. Another negative thing is that my mind tends to wander.²⁰

Joni Eareckson Tada acknowledges,

I have learned to . . . season my prayers with the word of God. It’s a way of talking to God in his language— speaking his dialect, using his vernacular, employing his idioms. . . . This is not a matter simply of divine vocabulary. It’s a matter of power. When we bring God’s word directly into our praying, we are bringing God’s power into our praying. Hebrews 4: 12 declares, “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword.” God’s word is living, and so it infuses our prayers with life and vitality. God’s word is also active, injecting energy and power into our prayer.²¹

Jesus gave us the example of praying Scripture even as He hung on the cross. The first prayer Jesus mentioned from the cross was “my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt 27:46). This prayer is a direct quotation of Psalm 22:1. The second prayer Jesus uttered was “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). This prayer was not previously Scripture, but it becomes Scripture and the disciple Stephen makes it his prayer when he was martyred (Acts 7:60). The third prayer Jesus uttered from the cross was “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46). Again, this is a word for word quote from Psalm 31:5. Jesus prayed the Scriptures—we should too.

²⁰ Donald S. Whitney, *Praying the Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015) 11.

²¹ Whitney, *Praying the Bible*, 42-43.

How exactly do we pray Scripture? John Piper answers this question, “open the Bible, start reading it, and pause at every verse and turn it into a prayer.”²² Piper says elsewhere, “praying the Word means reading (or reciting) Scripture in a spirit of prayer and letting the meaning of the verses become our prayer and inspire our thoughts.”²³ It is this simple. Praying Scripture will enable us to pray about everything because the range of human emotions in Scripture is as vast as the range of human emotions in day to day life. We are going to have a time to practice this tonight, but before we do, I want to make one more point from Philippians 4:6.

Point #3: Prayer is a high privilege.

Philippians 4:6 says we are to pray with “thanksgiving.” Prayer is something that many have taken for granted for so long they have forgotten what is taking place. In prayer, we are approaching the most powerful and wise being who has or will ever exist. He has given us His ear. We do not deserve His attention. We cannot earn the right to be heard. He listens to our prayers and speaks to us in His Word solely because He is a kind and benevolent God and Father. He has given us so much more than we deserve. For those of us in Christ, He has forgiven our sins and given us a place in paradise for eternity with Him. This is more than we could ever imagine. Prayer is a high privilege.

Since prayer is a privilege, it can be taken away. When we neglect prayer except for when we want something, or we live in a way that grieves the Holy Spirit of God (Eph 4:30), we are limiting the effectiveness of our prayers. James 5:16 makes it clear: “The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” Psalm 66:18 says, “If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.” Our sins will hinder our prayers. Christians cannot live any way they want and have a vibrant, meaningful prayer life. However, they can live holy lives and find meaning and effectiveness in their prayers. Prayer empowers the Christian to be the disciple-maker God expects us to be. Make prayer a priority.

Exercise:

We will end our lesson in a dedicated time of prayer. I want to encourage everyone to open their Bibles to Psalm 51 and let’s spend 5 minutes reading through God’s Word and stopping after every verse and praying to God about what we have read in His Word. Make the prayers that you read in this chapter your prayers.

Memory verse—Week 4: Philippians 4:6 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

²² Whitney, *Praying the Bible*, 33.

²³ Whitney, 79

Developing Disciple-Makers

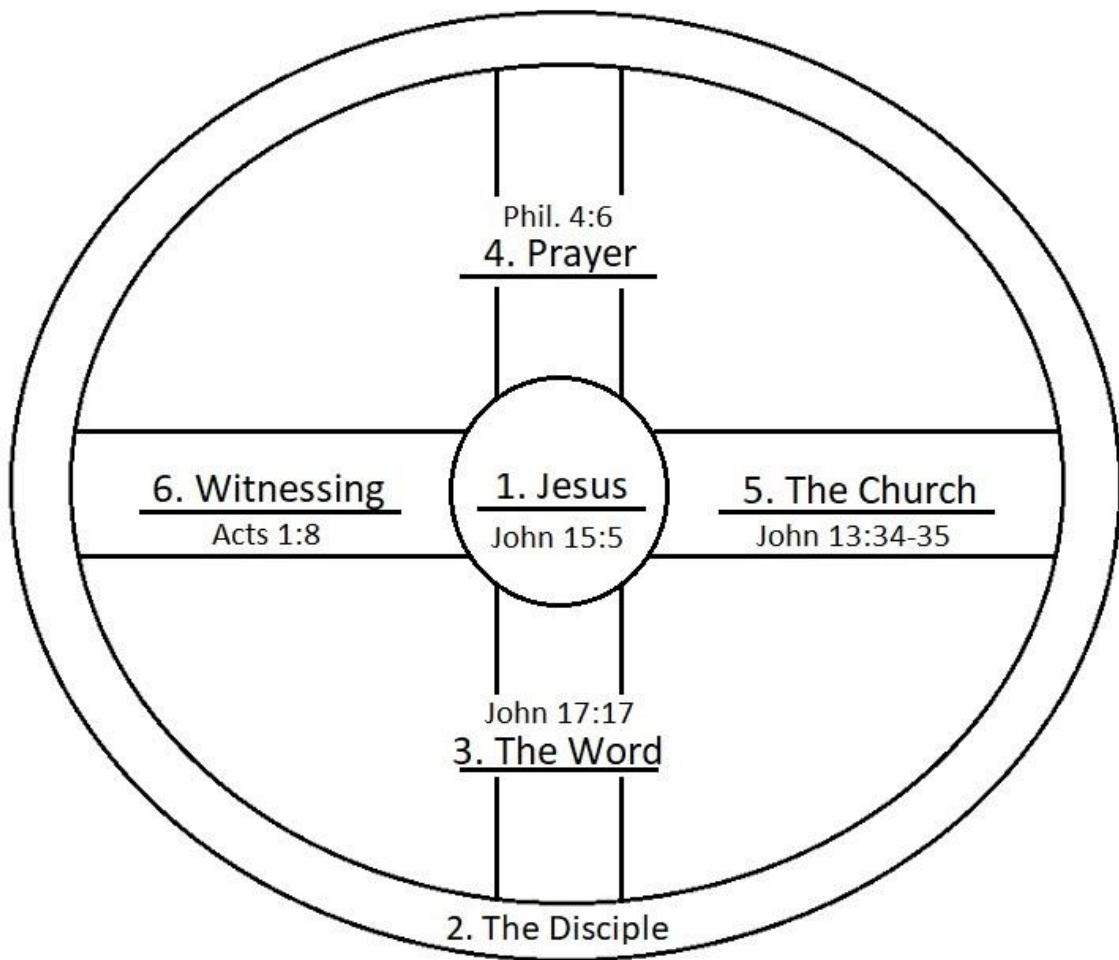
Six-Week Curriculum

Lesson 5—The Church, God’s Agency.

(Distribute an up-to-date handout: “The Disciple-Maker Wheel with blanks.”)

(Review the handout). So far we have learned that a disciple of Jesus is a disciple-maker. The disciple-maker must make Jesus the center of his or her life. The Word (the Bible) is foundational in connecting us to Jesus. Prayer is the means of connecting to God and gaining spiritual strength.

The Disciple-Maker Wheel



Main idea: The local Church is vital to the health of a disciple.

(Have the participants write “The Church” in the spoke marked #5.)

Intro: (Begin a discussion with the following question): “What are ways individuals can identify themselves as a Christian?” (Possible answers may include: baptism; a profession; church membership; church attendance; or good deeds). As we read our focal passage, let us look at how Jesus identifies someone as His disciple.

John 13:34–35 (ESV)

³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

(Have participants write down “John 13:34-35” above or below “The Church” on the handout.)

Point #1: Love the Church.

I could have used a host of Bible passages to display the importance of the local church for this lesson. I will reference other passages in this lesson, but I chose this Scripture as the focal passage to display the grand need for Christians to love the family of God. **A critical indicator of a Christian is his or her love for the family of God** (repeat this sentence for emphasis).

The New Testament uses several metaphors to describe the Church. One commonly used metaphor is that the Church is the family of God (2 Cor 6:18, Matt 12:49-50, Eph 2:19). How can we know if someone is a Christian? We can know it by their love for God’s family. **It is possible for individuals to make a public profession, to be baptized, to attend and join a local church, but if they do not love the family of God, the Bible makes it clear that they are not truly converted** (repeat this sentence for emphasis). 1 John 4:7–8 (ESV) says, “beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.” Love for the family of God is the greatest indicator someone has genuinely been born again.

A local church is not a building. A local church is a gathering of Christians who love God and love one another. Believers make up the Church; therefore, our love for the Church is for one another.

John 13:34 tells us how we are to love one another. Jesus says, “just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.” Jesus loves the Church. Jesus proved His love for the Church by sacrificing His life. 1 John 3:16 (ESV) “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.” Jesus loved the Church, and we ought to love one another with the same love.

This point cannot be overstated. **Love the Church.**

Point #2: Join the Church.

If we love the family of God, then we ought to join it. Church membership is a biblical idea. Jesus instituted the church. He tells Peter and the disciple in Matthew 16:18, “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” The Church belongs to Jesus. Pastors misspeak whenever they talk about “my church.” For example, “my church had 100 people in Sunday School last week. My church would never do that. My church does this.” The Church does not belong to the pastor. Nor does it belong to the members. I have heard church members say, “pastor, this is my church. I was here before you came. I’ll be here after you leave.” **The Church belongs to Jesus.** We are to join a local church to show our devotion to Jesus and His family—the family of God.

Church membership is a way to love the family of God. By the way, we are commanded to love the church even when its members are unlovely. In fact, that is when our love for the Church is most needed. Mark Dever has the local church in mind when he writes, “You and I cannot demonstrate love or joy or peace or patience or kindness sitting all by ourselves on an island. No, we demonstrate it when the people we have committed to loving give us good reasons *not* to love them, but we do anyway.”²⁴ Jesus loved the church when it was unlovely. It was His own disciple that betrayed Him to the religious leaders. Now, it is easily argued that Judas was not a part of the church, and I agree with that conclusion, but nonetheless, Judas identified himself as Jesus’ disciple. Jesus was aware of Judas’ evil heart during His entire earthly ministry. I think Jesus was aware that Judas would be the one to betray Him when it came His time to die on the cross. However, Jesus walked with Judas for three years, and He loved him the same as He loved every other disciple. Jesus loved the unlovely, and He is calling us to do the same.

It was more than Judas who deserted Jesus on the night he betrayed Him. All twelve disciples fled from Jesus in fear for their well-being. His most outspoken follower, Peter, publicly denied Him three times. If we are honest, there is not any of us who deserve the love of Christ. He loved us all when we were unlovely. Romans 5:8 (ESV) “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” His church deserves the same sacrificial devotion. It is a sad thing to see mature Christians leave a local church out of anger and resentment. God’s family deserves better. Love them when they are unlovely.

I will sometimes hear the excuse, “the church is full of hypocrites, which is why I do not go to church.” I pray that our church would repent of its hypocrisy, but even if it does not, it does not matter if the church is full of hypocrites. Christians are called to love the church even if it is full of hypocrites. You may be the one God uses to help straighten

²⁴ Mark Dever, *What Is a Healthy Church?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 28-29.

out the hypocrisy in the church. By the way, it is impossible to love the church from a distance. Someone may say, “I’ll love them as long as I don’t have to go there.” This is not loving. **To love His people you have to be a part of them. You have to be with them, therefore, join them.**

The New Testament records 59 “one another” passages.²⁵ In these passages, we are told how to treat our fellow Christians. Three of the “one another” commandments come from John 13:34-35. Three times in these two verses we are told to “love one another.” The command to “love one another” is recorded 15 times in the New Testament. Elsewhere we are told to: be at peace with each other; honor one another; accept one another; wait for each other; be kind and tenderhearted toward one another; forgive one another; submit to one another; be truthful to one another; admonish and encourage one another; confess your sins to one another; and many more that we do not have time to mention. The only possible way to do this is through total devotion to Christ’s church, including church membership. It is not optional. Jonathan Leeman writes, “once you choose Christ, you must choose his people, too. It’s a package deal. Choose the Father and the Son and you have to choose the whole family—which you do through a local church.”²⁶ Join the church.

Point #3: Hold the Church to a high standard.

It is convicting to know that our spiritual health depends on how we relate to others, specifically believers. (Begin a discussion with the following questions):

- “What happens to the church when professing Christians do not obey the “one another” passages?”
- “What should a local church do about individuals’ blatant and persistent disregard to these passages?”
- “What does the Bible say we should do?”

Matthew 18:15–18 (ESV)

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

²⁵ Carl F. George, *Prepare Your Church for the Future* (Tarrytown: Revell, 1991), 129-31.

²⁶ Jonathan Leeman, *Church Membership* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 31.

As long as the local church is applying biblical standards, the local church is God's affirming and denying agency on earth and in heaven. Whatever the church binds on earth will be bound in heaven. Whatever the church looses on earth will be loosed in heaven. The first commandment of Jesus is to confront a blatant, unrepentant sinner one-on-one in private. If the person persists in unrepentance, then secondly, confront the unrepentant sinner in private with a small group, two or three persons. If the unrepentant sinner persists, announce their sin to the church so that the church may pray for and exhort the person to submit to God's biblical instructions. If, after some time passes, the person is still in rebellion to biblical instruction, then the church should no longer consider this individual a church-member. The church should take whatever steps are necessary to remove this person from church membership (see also 1 Corinthians 5).

This is necessary because the integrity of the church is at stake. How many times have unrepentant sinner damaged the reputation of the Church because a local church allows professing members to continue in unrepentant sin without confrontation? How many times have blatant, unrepentant members hurt Christ's witness because churches allow them? Christ's church is to be holy. He has commanded us to be holy. He has commanded us to love one another, and unless these commandments carry consequences then they are merely suggestions. **God is *not* in the business of suggesting how we should live. He is in the business of commanding how we should live. This is for our good.** The question we face now, is will we trust in God's instructions for His church, or will we go on doing it the way we have always done it?

Love one another. Join Christ's Church. Hold the Church to a high standard.

Memory verse—Week 5: John 13:34–35 (ESV) A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Developing Disciple-Makers

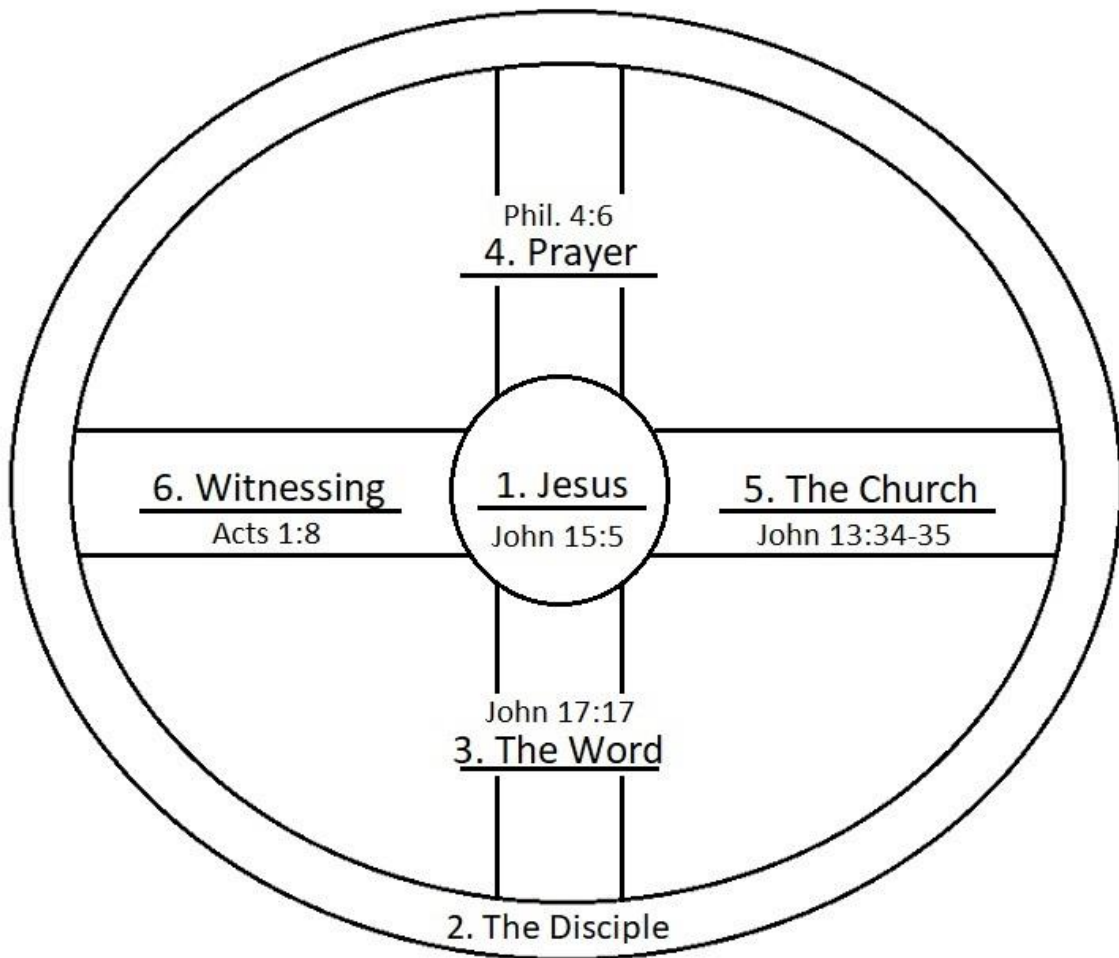
Six-Week Curriculum

Lesson 6—Witnessing, Christ’s Expectation.

(Distribute an up-to-date handout: “The Disciple-Maker Wheel with blanks.”)

(Review the handout). So far, we have learned that a disciple of Jesus is a disciple-maker. The disciple-maker must make Jesus the center of his or her life. The Word (the Bible) is foundational in connecting us to Jesus. Prayer lifts us to God where we gain spiritual strength. The Church is critical to the making of disciples.

The Disciple-Maker Wheel



Main idea: A Disciple is a Witness.

(Have the participants write “Witnessing” in the spoke marked #6.)

Intro: at age two, a little girl began to learn all the traditional fairy tales: Goldilocks; the Three Bears; and the Three Little Pigs. Simultaneously, her mother and father were sharing with her Bible stories at home. One day during family devotions, her mother read to her Revelation 3:20 “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.” When the mother finished, she asked, “If Jesus is knocking at your heart’s door, will you open the door and let Him in?” Without hesitation, the little girl responded, “not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin.”

It may seem like Christians hear that same response when we make efforts to witness to the lost world. Nonetheless, we are commanded to persevere because a disciple is a witness. Our verse is:

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

(Have participants write down “Acts 1:8” above or below “Witnessing” on the handout.)

Point #1: A Disciple is a Disciple-Maker.

The meaning of the term *disciple-maker* is two-fold. First, it entails disciplines that must be practiced—learning the Bible, prayer, and commitment to Christ’s church. These three disciplines develop someone into a disciple of Christ, but by definition, a disciple is a disciple-maker. A *disciple-maker* is someone who is intentional in making disciples of others. It is normal for disciples of Christ to witness regularly to those they encounter.

Jesus tells His disciples that they **will** be His witnesses (emphasize the word “will”). Witnessing is not optional. It is not only for ministry professionals. Jesus expects, equips, and empowers all His disciples to witness. (Begin a discussion with the following questions.)

Question: What are Jesus’ disciples a witness of?

Question: What is the definition of a witness?

A witness is someone who tells about what he or she has seen and experienced. If Jesus has changed your life, and that is true of all Christians, then He expects you to tell others about it. It was an old Methodist pastor who famously said that witnessing (or evangelism), “is just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.”²⁷ You and I have found the Bread of Life. We did not buy it. We did not earn it. It was given to us

²⁷ D. T. Niles, “Evangelism is just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread,” accessed October 1, 2019, <https://dallasgarrison.wordpress.com/2013/03/26/evangelism-is-just-one-beggar-telling-another-beggar-where-to-find-bread>.

freely through our faith in Jesus. Someone told us where we could find it. There is an endless supply of this bread. It will never run out. All the while, people are starving, dying, and spending an eternity in hell because of one of two reasons. (1) They rejected this bread, or (2) to our grief and shame, some were never told about this bread. The latter of these two reasons is unacceptable.

I want you to think back to when you were lost. Did you want to listen to the Gospel? Did you want to listen to spiritual truths or preaching? I did not. I had other things I would rather have been doing, but I heard. Later, I began to think about what I heard, and then I believed. At the time, I didn't want to hear it. But afterward, I am incredibly thankful someone told me even when I didn't want to hear it. Witnessing is essential. It is the only way that the lost are saved. Romans 10:17 "faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."

Point #2: The Holy Spirit empowers us.

The task of witnessing to the world is overwhelming. How could we ever make a difference in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth? The answer Acts 1:8 gives is that God has provided empowerment. He has given us the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers Christ's disciples. This is the way it has been since Pentecost. The first fulfillment of Acts 1:8 occurred in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples in Jerusalem. As a result, they go into the city and preach the gospel, and 3,000 souls are saved that day. Fear is the greatest obstacle to witnessing, but there is a remedy. He is called the Holy Spirit. He empowers Christ's disciples to do things they did not think possible. Kevin Ruffcorn says, "fear is the greatest threat to any evangelism proposal."²⁸

Question: Is it normal for disciple-makers to fear to start a gospel conversation? A. Absolutely!

Fear is not only normal; it is helpful. Some fear is helpful when starting a Gospel conversation. Billy Graham was once asked if he still feared to share the Gospel in a one to one setting. He replied, "Of course! Who doesn't? In fact, if I didn't feel a bit nervous, I would assume I was witnessing in my own strength. God allows us to feel a bit nervous, so we will trust in him and his power."²⁹ Even the Apostle Paul expressed fear during his ministry (1 Cor 2:3). The difference, however, is that Paul did not allow his fears to paralyze him into disobedience. All genuine believers are called to be witnesses

²⁸ Kevin E. Ruffcorn, *Rural Evangelism: Catching the Vision* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1994), 99.

²⁹ Timothy Beougher, e-mail message to author, July 22, 2019.

for Christ (Acts 1:8) despite their fears. The secret to overcoming fear is relying on the Holy Spirit for courage. The Holy Spirit empowers us.

Some of the most common fears that keep Christians from witnessing are rejection, looking stupid, being labeled a radical, or being asked a difficult question. The good news is all fears can be overcome. Study, practice, and experience overcome these fears. Sam Greer states, “evangelism is work.”³⁰ Disciple-makers must put some effort into learning how to best witness. J. Mack Stiles agrees, “it’s not that evangelism has been tried and found wanting, it’s that evangelism has been found difficult and left untried.”³¹

Illustration: Just as the best way to learn to swim is by being in the water, so it is with witnessing. Someone could study swimming, read books on swimming, and watch swimmers all day long, but would not learn to swim until after entering the water. Every new endeavor is a little scary, but with study, practice, and experience, most fears are found to be unrealistic. Disciple-makers cannot let witnessing be left untried.

In reality, disciple-makers who regularly practice witnessing will make a difference in the lives of some. We will not make a difference in the lives of everyone, but we will make a difference in the lives of some. Those “some” will be eternally grateful. J. Mack Stiles explains, “the fact is, most people come to faith through the influence of family members, small-group Bible Studies, or a conversation with a friend after a church service.” Bill Hull adds, “Ninety percent of all people attend a church because a friend brought them.”³² Thom Rainer agrees, “Sadly, only 2% of the church members invite the unchurched to church, while 80% of the unchurched would come to church if invited.”³³ Rainer adds,

Almost eight of ten unchurched Americans would welcome a gospel conversation. Another 12% would discuss it with some discomfort, and only 11% would change the subject as soon as possible. We can’t use the poor excuse that the unchurched really aren’t interested in gospel conversations. In reality, church members are more likely not to be interested in initiating gospel conversations.³⁴

³⁰ Sam Greer, *The Gospel Conversation: Engaging the Lost in Everyday Life* (Middletown, DE: Create Space Publishing, 2017), 91.

³¹ Stiles, *Evangelism*, 42.

³² Hull, *Disciple-Making Church*, 198.

³³ Thom S. Rainer, *The Unchurched Next Door: Understanding Faith Stages As Keys to Sharing Your Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 25.

³⁴ Thom S. Rainer, “Five Surprising Insights about the Unchurched,” *Growing Healthy*

Rainer lists five encouraging truths for witnessing to the unchurched: (1) “most unchurched do indeed have some church background;” (2) “most unchurched quit church because they got out of the habit of churchgoing;” (3) “one-third of the unchurched have plans to go to church in the future;” (4) “the unchurched are very open to gospel conversations;” and (5) “if you invite them, they will come.”³⁵

It is necessary to understand that there will be occasional opposition. Not everyone is open to spiritual conversation. It is ordinary for Christians to experience some opposition. Bill Hull explains, “think of conflict as normal, and you can emotionally adjust and continue to concentrate on the mission.”³⁶ This is excellent advice. Many Christians have given up on their witnessing endeavors because of one or two discouraging encounters. The New Testament disciple-makers were not only prepared for opposition, “they considered it a sure sign of their success”³⁷ (Acts 14:22).

The best motivation to overcome the fear of witnessing is our love for God. Sam Greer explains, “God’s glory is the primary reason to engage the lost in everyday life. Jesus is not one Christ among many Christs. Jesus alone is the Christ. He alone is worthy of all the worship of every tongue, tribe, nation, and people. Evangelism in everyday life must be a priority because Jesus is worthy of every person’s worship.”³⁸ When disciple-makers grow in their love for God, they find themselves naturally compelled to share with others about their great God. Listen to how John Dawson explains this truth:

Don’t wait for a feeling of love in order to share Christ with a stranger. You already love your heavenly Father, and you know that this stranger is created by Him, but separated from Him, so take those first steps in evangelism because you love God. It is not primarily out of a compassion for humanity that we share our faith or pray for the lost; it is first of all, love for God.

God is calling us above all else to be the kind of people whose theme and passion is the supremacy of God in all of life. No one will be able to rise to the magnificence of the missionary cause who does not feel the magnificence of Christ. There will be no big world vision without a macro

Churches. Together (December 2016), <https://thomrainer.com/2016/12/five-surprising-insights-unchurched/>.

³⁵ Rainer, “Five Surprising Insights.”

³⁶ Hull, *Disciple-Making Church*, 116.

³⁷ Hull.

³⁸ Greer, *Gospel Conversation*, 89.

God. There will be no passion to draw others into our worship where there is no passion for worship.³⁹

Let your love for God be your motivation that overcomes fear. Jesus expects you to be his witness.

Point #3: We are to witness everywhere.

Acts 1:8 says we are to be witnesses in “Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8 is an overwhelming task, but it is not impossible. As we become disciple-makers, our goal is to make more than converts to Christianity. Our goal is to make another disciple-maker. Our goal is to see a lost person saved through faith in Jesus, taught to walk with Jesus through spiritual disciplines, and then to become a witness—another disciple-maker. This is an idea of exponential growth. It is only through this method that we can be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the end of the earth.

The early New Testament Church considered exponential growth their strategy. Bill Hull explains,

The first church had the intentional strategy of making reproducing disciples, as described in Acts 2:42–47. Guided by Acts 1:8, the Twelve must have planned to send out many disciples. A reproductive congregation led to believers who reproduced the same practices wherever they went. They would start churches by preaching and would organize converts into small groups that would practice these priorities and reproduce in turn.⁴⁰

The Bible has only one strategy. God has never had a plan “B.” The New Testament Church practiced this strategy, and it worked. They made disciples throughout all the known world. The question is: “will you buy into it?”

Conclusion: Are you truly Christ’s disciple? Are you practicing Spiritual Disciplines that will help you grow as a disciple? Will you rely on the Holy Spirit to overcome your fears in being the witness Christ expects you to be? Will you be a disciple-maker who produces more disciple-makers? The salvation of lost souls depends on it. The glory and worship of God depend on it.

Memory verse—Week 6: *Acts 1:8 (ESV) “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

³⁹Greer, *Gospel Conversations*, 180.

⁴⁰Greer, 215.

APPENDIX 3
CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

The following rubric was used to evaluate the disciple-making curriculum developed by the author and distributed to the selected expert panel as described in the second goal of chapter one.

CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

Biblical Disciple-Making Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
Evaluation—Lesson # (circle one) One Two Three Four Five Six					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Clarity					
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.					
The main point of the lesson is clearly stated.					
The sub-points of the lesson support the thesis.					
Overall, the lesson is clearly presented.					
Biblical Faithfulness					
The material is faithful to the Bible’s teaching on disciple-making.					
The lesson was derived from biblical principle.					
Scripture was correctly interpreted and applied to disciple-making.					
Scripture references are relevant to disciple-making.					
Relevance					
The lesson is clearly relevant to the issue of disciple-making.					
The lesson contains points of practical application.					
Overall, the lesson is clearly relevant.					

APPENDIX 4

DISCIPLE-MAKING SURVEY (DMS) (Post-Project)

The Post-Project survey was utilized to measure the comprehension and convictions of the curriculum by comparing it with the identical Pre-Project survey. Additionally, four open-ended questions were added to the end so that comments about the curriculum could included.

DISCIPLE-MAKING SURVEY (DMS)
(Post-Project)

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to develop disciple-makers of Flintville First Baptist Church. This research is being conducted by Josh Moran for the purpose of completing a ministry project. In this research, you will be asked to describe your personal and public practices and beliefs in regard to being a disciple of Jesus. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. By your completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Jesus was committed to making more than converts—He was committed to making disciples. The purpose for this survey is to evaluate the disciple-making habits and practices of Sunday school members of Flintville First Baptist Church. To remain anonymous, submit an identification number in place of your name. It is important to create an identification number so that your answers can be compared to a post-test after the teaching sessions on disciple-making have been completed.

Date: _____

Identification #: _____

Gender: _____

1. Do you consider yourself a Christian? Yes ___ No ___

2. Have you repented of your sins and confessed
Jesus as Lord? Yes ___ No ___

3. Are you married? Yes ___ No ___

4. What is your age in years?

___ A. 17 and younger

___ B. 18 – 24

___ C. 25 – 34

___ D. 35 – 44

___ E. 45 – 54

___ F. 55 – 64

___ G. 65 – 74

___ H. 75 and over

Directions: Please mark the appropriate box utilizing the following scale:

- SD = Strongly Disagree
- D = Disagree
- DS = Disagree Somewhat
- AS = Agree Somewhat
- A = Agree
- SA = Strongly Agree

	Spiritual Habits:	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
5.	I am interested in learning about God.						
6.	I spend time each day reading the Bible.						
7.	I have a dedicated prayer time each day of the week.						
8.	I am passionate about my relationship with God.						
9.	I strive to live by the moral principles found in the Bible.						
10.	I make an effort to be at peace with all people.						
11.	I regularly attend church.						
12.	I regularly attend Sunday school.						
13.	I use my gifts and talents to serve my local church.						
14.	I have someone with whom I can talk to about spiritual matters.						
15.	I have someone to help hold me accountable in my spiritual life.						
16.	I strive to forgive others who have offended me.						
17.	When I learn that I have disobeyed the teachings of the Bible, I try to correct my behavior.						
18.	I seek advice from mature Christians about the problems I encounter in life.						
19.	I like to worship and pray with other believers.						
20.	I pray with other believers regularly.						
21.	I feel I have a good understanding on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.						
22.	I feel confident in my abilities to lead someone to faith in Christ.						
23.	I feel a responsibility towards The Great Commission.						

24	I am open to constructive criticism from fellow Christians.						
25	I believe the Holy Spirit is active in my life.						
26	I see myself as loved and valued by God.						
27	I am growing in my relationship with God.						
	Disciple-Making Habits	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
28	I pray for the lost regularly.						
29	I see those different from me as loved and valued by God.						
30	I go out of my way to make friendships with someone I know is lost.						
31	I go out of my way to show the love of God to people I encounter.						
32	My neighbors and co-workers know that I am a Christian.						
33	I seek out opportunities to talk to others about spiritual matters.						
34	I feel confident in my abilities to teach other believers how to know God better.						
35	I regularly carry gospel tracts with me.						
36	I utilize gospel tracts in my witnessing.						
37	I have found gospel tracts that I really like.						
38	I believe all Christians are responsible to play a role in completing The Great Commission.						
39	I feel personally responsible to help the poor and helpless.						
40	I know the names of most everyone in a Sunday morning worship service.						
41	I intentionally greet visitors at church.						
42	I intentionally make conversation with people I do not know.						
43	I am intentionally patient, kind, and generous to my servers when eating at a restaurant.						
44	I help my friends and neighbors with problems they have.						
45	I know the names and family members of my closest neighbors.						
46	I am involved in missions efforts.						

47	I feel burdened to make visits to those I know are injured, sick, or homebound.						
48	I make or buy food for others outside of my immediate family.						
49	One day God will hold me accountable for how I have ministered to others.						
50	I am growing in my knowledge of disciple-making.						

1. Please elaborate on the usefulness of the ministry project (sermons & lessons) specifically as to its helpfulness in *equipping* you to engage in disciple-making.

2. Please elaborate on the usefulness of the ministry project (sermons & lessons) specifically as to its helpfulness in *motivating* you to engage in personal evangelism.

3. Were there any specific aspects of the ministry project that stood out as especially helpful? Unhelpful?

4. What changes, if any, do you intend to make concerning your participation in disciple-making?

APPENDIX 5

PERMISSION TO UTILIZE WHEEL GRAPHIC

Below is a correspondence I had with The Navigators granting permission to utilize The Wheel Graphic.



SBTS

Joshua Moran <jmoran039@students.sbts.edu>

Wheel diagram

2 messages

jmoran039@students.sbts.edu <jmoran039@students.sbts.edu>

Thu, Jan 5, 2017 at 9:05 AM

To: "info@navigators.org" <info@navigators.org>

As a Doctor of Ministry student I was assigned Dawson Trotman's biography for a class and thoroughly enjoyed it. Particularly, I appreciated The Wheel diagram and could consider adapting it for use in the church I pastor. Are there steps to gaining permission for using this diagram in my church?

Rev. Josh Moran

FBC, Flintville, TN

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Info Mailbox info@navigators.org

Thu, Jan 5, 2017 at 3:03 PM

To: "jmoran039@students.sbts.edu" <jmoran039@students.sbts.edu>

Permission granted!

The Navigators

Sent from my iPad

[Quoted text hidden]

APPENDIX 6

LETTER TO EXPERT PANEL

Below is the letter that I mailed the members of the expert panel detailing their responsibilities.

8/17/19

Dear Brother in Christ,

I am writing to you because you are someone that I admire in the ministry. I thank you for agreeing to help me by evaluating my curriculum for my upcoming ministry project at FFBC. Your feedback will help me to complete the Doctor of Ministry degree at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

My project is aimed at developing disciple-makers. I will be implementing a six-week project. I plan to email you the first week's curriculum on August 26th along with an evaluation rubric. If you could get me your input back by the following Monday, it would be greatly appreciated. Attached is the evaluation rubric that you will utilize in the evaluation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Josh Moran".

Josh Moran
Pastor
Flintville First Baptist Church
Josh7600@att.net
(931) 339-7242

APPENDIX 7

PRE- AND POST-TEST DMS RESULTS

The results of the pre- and post-test DMS are listed on the next page.

Pre- and Post-test DMS Results

Gender	10 Males	9 Females	
1. Do you consider yourself a Christian?	19 Yes	0 No	
2. Have you repented of your sins and confessed Jesus as Lord?	19 Yes	0 No	
3. Are you married?	18 Yes	1 No	
4. What is your age in years?	17 & Younger 0	18-24 0	25-34 0
	35-44 1	45-54 4	55-64 8
	65-74 2	75+ 4	

Question	Pre-test	Post-test	Percentage Increase
Spiritual Habits			
5. I am interested in learning about God.	5.89	5.74	-2.7%
6. I spend time each day reading the Bible.	5.05	5.16	2.1%
7. I have a dedicated prayer time each day of the week.	4.84	5.11	5.4%
8. I am passionate about my relationship with God.	5.58	5.53	-0.9%
9. I strive to live by the moral principles found in the Bible.	5.68	5.68	0.0%
10. I make an effort to be at peace with all people.	5.53	5.63	1.9%
11. I regularly attend church.	5.74	5.79	0.9%
12. I regularly attend Sunday school.	5.42	5.58	2.9%
13. I use my gifts and talents to serve my local church.	5.32	5.26	-1.0%
14. I have someone with whom I can talk to about spiritual matters.	5.53	5.53	0.0%
15. I have someone to help hold me accountable in my spiritual life.	5.21	5.32	2.0%
16. I strive to forgive others who have offended me.	5.05	5.32	5.2%

17. When I learn that I have disobeyed the teachings of the Bible, I try to correct my behavior.	5.68	5.58	-1.9%
18. I seek advice from mature Christians about the problems I encounter in life.	5.26	5.47	4.0%
19. I like to worship and pray with other believers.	5.58	5.74	2.8%
20. I pray with other believers regularly.	4.95	5.16	4.3%
21. I feel I have a good understanding on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.	5.11	5.26	3.1%
22. I feel confident in my abilities to lead someone to faith in Christ.	4.58	4.79	4.6%
23. I feel a responsibility towards the Great Commission.	5.16	5.42	5.1%
24. I am open to constructive criticism from fellow Christians.	5.21	5.00	-4.0%
25. I believe the Holy Spirit is active in my life.	5.63	5.63	0.0%
26. I see myself as loved and valued by God.	5.63	5.74	1.9%
27. I am growing in my relationship with God.	5.42	5.74	5.8%
Disciple Making Habits			
28. I pray for the lost regularly.	5.32	5.32	0.0%
29. I see those different from me as loved and valued by God.	5.37	5.47	2.0%
30. I go out of my way to make friendships with someone I know is lost.	4.53	4.74	4.7%
31. I go out of my way to show the love of God to people I encounter.	5.00	5.21	4.2%
32. My neighbors and co-workers know that I am a Christian.	5.58	5.68	1.9%
33. I seek out opportunities to talk to others about spiritual matters.	4.58	4.68	2.3%
34. I feel confident in my abilities to teach other believers how to know God better.	4.58	4.68	2.3%
35. I regularly carry gospel tracts with me.	3.47	3.95	13.6%
36. I utilize gospel tracts in my witnessing.	3.63	4.05	11.6%
37. I have found gospel tracts that I really like.	4.17	4.47	7.4%
38. I believe all Christians are responsible to play a role in completing the Great Commission.	5.63	5.58	-0.9%
39. I feel personally responsible to help the poor and helpless.	4.74	4.89	3.3%

40. I know the names of most everyone in a Sunday morning worship service.	4.89	4.58	-6.5%
41. I intentionally greet visitors at church.	5.05	5.21	3.1%
42. I intentionally make conversation with people I do not know.	4.84	5.05	4.3%
43. I am intentionally patient, kind, and generous to my servers when eating at a restaurant.	5.42	5.39	-0.6%
44. I help my friends and neighbors with problems they have.	5.11	5.11	0.1%
45. I know the names and family members of my closest neighbors.	4.53	4.63	2.3%
46. I am involved in missions efforts.	4.50	4.32	-4.1%
47. I feel burdened to make visits to those I know are injured, sick, or homebound.	4.58	4.63	1.1%
48. I make or buy food for others outside of my immediate family.	4.42	4.78	8.1%
49. One day God will hold me accountable for how I have ministered to others.	5.84	5.95	1.8%
50. I am growing in my knowledge of disciple making.	5.21	5.47	5.1%
Average of Spiritual Habits section	5.35	5.44	1.7%
Average of Disciple-Making Practices section	4.83	4.95	2.6%
Total Averages	5.09	5.20	2.1%

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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING DISCIPLE-MAKERS AT FLINTVILLE FIRST BAPIST CHURCH IN FLINTVILLE, TENNESSEE

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This project was designed to develop disciple-makers at Flintville First Baptist Church in Flintville, Tennessee. Chapter 1 explains the context, rationale, purpose, and goals of this project. Chapter 2 presents the biblical and theological support for developing disciple-makers. The exegesis of Matthew 28:16-20, Acts 1:8, John 4:1-42, and Acts 16:16-34 support the biblical and theological argument. Chapter 3 explains the theoretical, historical, and practical support for developing disciple-makers. It maintains that biblical disciple-making begins with personal spiritual preparation, considers different life contexts, articulates the Gospel clearly, and produces reproducing disciples. Chapter 4 includes the details of the project: pre-test and post-test surveys; developing, evaluating, and teaching the curriculum; and the timeline in which all of this is accomplished. Chapter 5 evaluates the entire project.

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