

MAKING DISCIPLES

(You may wish to divide these up into 4 different LDG sessions)

“The Mission of Community Bible Study is to make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ in our communities through caring, in-depth Bible study, available to all”

WHAT EXACTLY IS A TRUE DISCIPLE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST?

A **true disciple** observes the teachings of Jesus. Jesus spoke these words in what we call the Great Commission: Matthew 28:19-20, “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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

A **true disciple** abides in God’s Word. Jesus said John 8:31 that those who abide in his word are truly his disciples.

A **true disciple** will abide in Christ and bear fruit. Jesus said In John 15:5 that those who abide in him will bear much fruit.

A **true disciple** is recognizable. In Acts 4:13, the people observing Peter and John “*recognized that they had been with Jesus.*” They had seen them hanging out with him.

This is just a brief beginning in defining, from the scriptures, what it means to be a true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. I encourage you to spend some of your quiet times developing a fuller understanding of this very important concept.

MAKING DISCIPLES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST? WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE IN MY LIFE?

Christ, the supreme example

1. He was **purposeful**. Because of God’s great love for us, he...

Philippians 2:5-7, “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant...”

John 10:15b-16a, “...I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also...”

John 10:18, “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.”

Jesus did this for us when he came to earth. He was very intentional. He chose to come. He counted the cost. He gave up his equality with God. He was born in our likeness! He was humble and obedient. He came to seek and to save. He came to serve.

We will need to be purposeful, intentional, if we are going to participate in the Mission Statement of Community Bible Study to make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. It will require that we empty ourselves of our own “selfish ambition...counting others as more significant than ourselves” (Phil.2:3). It will require being willing to lay down our lives – perhaps to be inconvenienced, or stretched beyond our comfort zone.

- Share a specific story where you were intentional with someone. Were you blessed?

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2. He **spent time**...

Time...how many of us have more time than we know what to do with?

Busy, rushed, more on our “to do list” than we ever finish in a day. Pushed everyday by the “tyranny of the urgent”. voicemail, email, Facebook; calls to make, notes to write, a checkbook to balance, bills to pay. Grocery shopping, laundry, home repairs to make.

Do you think Jesus ever felt that way? Every day he dealt with the expectations of his disciples (“we want more time with you”), the expectations of the people who were pressing in on him daily, and family who thought he should be there for them. Questions to answer! People to heal. Needing to equip his disciples for the ministry he would place in their hands. And when will I sleep? When will I have my quiet time? I only have three years to accomplish my task!

But we absolutely never see him rushed, do we? Never see him turn someone away because he doesn’t have time.

Some great examples of Jesus’ consideration regarding time:

Luke 8:40-56 – The account of Jairus’ dying daughter and the woman with the discharge of blood. The woman received the time and attention she needed. Jairus grew in his faith as he saw his daughter raised from the dead.

Luke 10:38-42 – Jesus is spending time in the home of dear friends, Mary and Martha. Martha learns a great lesson regarding how Jesus valued time.

John 4:1-45 – Jesus takes time with the Samaritan woman despite being tired (v.6) and hungry (v.33).

John 11:1-42 – Lazarus is very ill. His sisters send for Jesus. Read his shocking response to that news in v.6.

Luke 18:15-16 – Too busy for children? Not Jesus!

John 5:19 and 8:28 – In these two verses Jesus speaks of doing only what his Father directed him to do and speaking only what his Father directed him to speak. In Ephesians 2:10 we are told that God has prepared good works for us to walk in.

- Will you choose to give him your time, allowing him to accomplish through you all he intends?
- Will this mean creating some margin in your life so that you will be available?

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3. He **sacrificed**...

Time, energy, personal space. He was always available – crowds followed him everywhere he went and he had compassion on them.

“And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” Matthew 9:35-36

Personal comfort. He had no place to lay his head.

“And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.’” Matthew 8:20

Alone time. We see him going out early in the morning or late at night to have time alone with the Father.

“In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God.” Luke 6:12

We could go on and on looking at examples of how Jesus sacrificed to make disciples. We might consider his example to be extreme...not something he expects of us.

- Are we willing to ask... how far would you have me go, LORD, to reach out to _____ in my core group? What sacrifice would you have me make for the sake of another who needs to experience your love?

Jesus said, *“Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”* Matthew 10:39

A precious truth from Ephesians:

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10

Add to that,

“it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” Philippians 2:12

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Christ, the supreme example

4. He never gave up...

Peter is an amazing example of this truth for which we are all thankful... **Jesus never gives up on us.**

Jesus calls Peter to be his disciple and Peter follows immediately.
(Mt. 4:18-20)

Peter walks on the water toward Jesus, becomes afraid, and Jesus reaches out his hand and saves him. Jesus questions his lack of faith. (Mt. 14:23-31)

Peter makes a clear declaration of who he believes Christ is when he answers Jesus' question in Matthew 16, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*"

Peter has the incredible privilege of being present at the transfiguration of Christ (Mt. 17:1ff)

At the Last Supper Jesus predicts that all his disciples will fall away from him that night. But Peter says, "*Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.*" Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." Peter said to him, "*Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!*" (Mt. 26:30-35)

When Jesus is arrested later that evening the scripture records that Peter followed him at a distance. (Mt. 26:58)

And then, as we all know, Peter denied Christ three times that night
(Mt. 26:69-75)

Peter demonstrated amazing faith at times. And he also experienced unbelievable lapses of faith. But **JESUS NEVER GAVE UP ON PETER.**

After his resurrection, Jesus has a conversation with Peter that is very familiar to all of us when he asks Peter three times if he loves him. Certainly not a coincidence that Jesus asks Peter this question three times and just as Peter had denied Christ three times, he now declares his love for him three times. (John 21:15-17)

As recorded in Acts 2, Peter emerges as the leader, empowered by the Holy Spirit to establish the church of Jesus Christ. He serves as a pillar of the infant church until his death. Near the end of his life, Peter challenged those he had shepherded with these words, "*I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd [tend, nurture, guard, guide] the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain,*

but eagerly [cheerfully]; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples [patterns, models of Christian living] to the flock.” (1 Peter 5)

The CBS Servants Team Manual clearly calls leaders to be involved in the shepherding of those they are called to serve. In one chapter, speaking to that call, it says,

“Making disciples is what we do; shepherding is how we do it.”

So...the question we each must answer is: will I choose to answer that call?

If we will purpose in our hearts to serve God’s people, if we will spend time with them, sacrifice for them, and never give up on them, God will bless our service and we will have the joy of seeing them grow in faith. That’s for sure!

Peter ended his challenge to those he shepherded with this promise,

*“When the chief Shepherd appears,
you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”*

Wow!

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