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DEVELOPING A STRUCTURED DISCIPLE-MAKING  
PROCESS AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF  
GARRETTSVILLE, OHIO

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
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Doctor of Educational Ministry

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by  
David Francis Gray  
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**APPROVAL SHEET**

DEVELOPING A STRUCTURED DISCIPLE-MAKING  
PROCESS AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF  
GARRETTSVILLE, OHIO

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For the glory of God

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- BDAG Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000
- NIDNTTE Silva, Moisés, ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*. 2nd ed. 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014



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## PREFACE

It is hard to believe I have had the immense pleasure and challenge of working on this project. I am eternally grateful to my advisor Dr. Robert Plummer, whose gentle nudges gently but firmly goaded me to completion. My friends at First Baptist Church of Garrettsville, Ohio, have been so very patient with me. They have heard for a long time that this time was coming. FBCG has encouraged me in more ways than I could possibly document. My greatest supporter has been my wonderful wife. Betty is beautiful inside and out. Her quiet confidence and matter-of-fact acceptance of my constant talk about this work has been awe-inspiring and humbling. Betty is a model of fidelity and excellence that I will always treasure. She is God's gift to me.

This work is dedicated to the memory of my late father, Alvin Robert Gray. He taught me to be a man. I wish my mother, Elizabeth "Sis" Gray, could have seen this before her passing. She loved when I worked hard.

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has been a place where I have been both affirmed and helped in a multitude of ways. The men and women of this institution inspire me.

David Francis Gray

Garrettsville, Ohio

December 2023

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The website of First Baptist Church of Garrettsville states, “Our purpose is to express our love for God by obeying the command of our Lord Jesus Christ to make disciples as we meet people at the point of need.”<sup>1</sup> A structured disciple-making process must be implemented to accomplish the church’s purpose. Jesus provides a potent, timeless, and reproducible disciple-making example that will be imitated by First Baptist Church. This way of making disciples is most clearly demonstrated in the book of Matthew, from chapter 4 through the beginning of chapter 10. Making disciples that can make disciples is a necessary component of obedience to Jesus Christ (Matt 28:19–20).

#### **Context**

First Baptist Church of Garrettsville, Ohio (FBCG) was founded in 1969. FBCG is currently located just outside of Garrettsville in Hiram Township. The rural church sits on a seven-acre parcel of land. The church facility can comfortably seat 150 but currently has an average attendance of approximately fifty persons. The church has been experiencing a gradual numerical decline.

I have served as the senior pastor of FBCG for twenty years and am the only paid staff member. During these two decades, First Baptist has experienced several growth spurts followed by corresponding membership declines. Currently, the church suffers from a lack of formal leadership. We have a volunteer worship leader and a deacon. Besides our treasurer and teachers, the other people taking responsibility for

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<sup>1</sup> David Gray, “Purpose Statement,” last modified December 31, 2019, <https://fbcgarrettsville.org>. I created this purpose statement for the FBCG website and for several church flyers and pamphlets published in the last few years.

leadership work are not acknowledged anywhere. There is a scant formal structure. I desire to utilize a disciple-making process that will infuse energy into the life of the church.

### **Disciples Making Disciples at FBCG**

Disciple-making at FBCG happens in a number of ways. Sunday morning worship is the primary vehicle used by the pastor and congregation to initiate and maintain disciple-making. I preach a sermon that usually includes an explanation of how to become a Christian and how to grow in sanctification. Great emphasis is put on every church member having a responsibility to live in line with Matthew 28:19–20. The Sunday morning worship service also promotes opportunities for discipleship within the FBCG context.

There is an adult Sunday School class that is led by a volunteer. He teaches through various books of the Bible and biblical topics and/or Christian living books. Six to ten people regularly attend the class, which is held before the worship service on Sunday morning. Bible study classes are held Wednesday evenings as well.

The Wednesday classes are aimed at adults, and men and women attend separate classes. There are 10 to 15 regular attendees in the women's class and 8 to 12 regular attendees in the men's class. The men go through books of the Bible verse-by-verse, while the women use a similar method that is often topic driven. These two classes are the primary teaching vehicle for the church. The classes are used effectively to help participants to delve deeply into the Word of God. Church members are encouraged to make disciples personally when they attend Sunday School, Sunday morning worship, and Wednesday evening classes.

The pastor and other teachers in the congregation encourage people to be disciples that can make disciples of Jesus Christ, who, in turn, make more disciples of Jesus. I have adopted an acronym called TEAM, which stands for Together Empowered

Assigned Mission. Everyone is encouraged to be involved in making disciples everywhere they find themselves. Members are exhorted to obey the Great Commission in every context or location. FBCG members are instructed to look for opportunities to connect with people in their homes, the community, and around the world for the express purpose of developing disciples. A number of groups have been started, and many have chosen to be on mission for God.

One man started a Bible Study at his job for men who work the same type of odd shift he works. A master gardener has begun a gardening group. People are invited to learn tips about gardening and become potential disciples. Another FBCG member has become a certified counselor and freely assists community members. Several people go out on lay-renewal weekends to help other congregations strengthen their church bodies. Others function mostly at the church building, maintaining the equipment and property that allow other ministries to function. These opportunities to serve include audio-visual, childcare, lawn care, cleaning, special occasion food preparation, music for worship, and much more.

A large percentage of the congregation is regularly involved in an activity that can be called ministry. Much of this work is motivated by a desire to participate in the disciple-making process. These efforts are inspired in part by the teaching and preaching done regularly in the church that emphasizes engagement in discipleship activities.

### **Barriers to Successful Disciple-Making**

A lot of ministry or service activity is generated by the members of First Baptist Church of Garrettsville, but the activities happening outside of the church building are not well documented or measured in terms of accountability. Likewise, activities within the church have no clear structure for being accountable to the body. There is little written documentation concerning what is permissible and what is not.

The lack of coordination between different groups within FBCG causes

confusion and discouragement. A measurable, reproducible, and biblical discipleship process would help the church. First Baptist Church members generally have a hard time identifying how what they are doing fulfills making disciples as we meet people at their point of need.

Lack of clarity causes problems in other areas as well. Standards of congregational behavior are subjective. What is expected of a member and when he or she has done well or poorly is ill-defined. There is minimal celebration of success or censure and correction for failure. People come and go without knowing or fully embracing their role in the church body. There is no reasonable way to receive a report.

A lack of individual and corporate vision has resulted in a lack of focus and accountability. People are doing what is right in their own eyes because there is no apparent measuring tool. Good and bad or right and wrong become nebulous concepts. It is hard for people to keep going when they do not clearly know the goal and how far along the path they have traveled. The church needs a solid vision that can serve as an organizing principle for all of the church's ministry.

### **Rationale**

A measurable, reproducible, and biblical disciple-making process can address the above problems. Proverbs 28:18 states, "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."<sup>2</sup> In other words, if there is not direction from God, the people cast off all restraint. The congregation is confused and discouraged because there is no clear concept of how the church body can individually and collectively make disciples.

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<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations in this project are from the *King James Version*.

## **A Reasonable Organizing Concept**

FBCG leadership must be engaged in a process to cast a vision that will be a basis for organizing the church's overall ministry. By tethering the effort to the Word of God, activities can be judged by whether they fit a process clearly identified in Scripture. Drawing from a concept suggested in Matthew 9:35–38, the church can develop and maintain a flexible framework to help FBCG become properly organized.

Members can be asked how they are doing in relation to three types of tasks. Are they regularly teaching and/or being taught? Are they preaching, sharing the truth of God's Word, and/or experiencing the Word being properly declared? Finally, are they healing or having compassion by doing good in a regular and structured way that helps their fellow human beings experience health and wholeness? These activities indicate the richness of a person or group's spiritual health. Proper application of the new metric can be used to create and mold FBCG's structures and systems.

Church members need to see a pathway for continual spiritual growth. Congregants should be encouraged to move along the process of being taught, or *experiencing* preaching, to *participating* in ministry. In the process, they will be encouraged to teach what they know, preach the truth of the Word of God, and develop ways to be healing agents in the community. A structured pathway leads members to a realization that they will need to be constant learners who are called to declare God's truth and display His compassion in order to effectively obey the Great Commission.

When this idea, called "Teach, Preach, Heal," is properly adopted, a greater percentage of the congregation can participate in the joy of making disciples. Because the rhythm of congregants' lives is not always in sync with the rhythm of the corporate church function, those out of step with the schedule of the church are left out of meaningful ways to experience accountability and enjoy the benefits afforded to others. However, all of the metrics of "Teach, Preach, Heal" can be applied to individuals.

## **Benefits of “Teach, Preach, Heal”**

“Teach, Preach, and Heal” can train church leadership to connect with and assist members who are unable to avail themselves of traditional church involvement, making accountability and a reward apparatus available to all who are a part of FBCG. Clarity, encouragement, focus, and vision can be enhanced by adopting “Teach, Preach, Heal” as a disciple-making process. The process affects every aspect of the church as it attempts to live in line with FBCG’s stated purpose “to express our love for God by obeying the command of our Lord Jesus Christ to make disciples as we meet people at the point of need.”<sup>3</sup> The Great Commission is expressed in Matthew 28:18–20. Jesus demands that those who are His followers make disciples that would learn to obey all His commands.

The process of making disciples is demonstrated in the life of Jesus in the first teaching discourse recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus showed us the way when He went about teaching, preaching, healing, and having compassion on the masses. In Ephesians 2, the apostle Paul indicates Christians are made by God to perform particular works (Eph 2:10). In Ephesians 4, Paul calls on church leaders to equip the saints for the “work of the ministry” (Eph 4:12). Equipping the saints is giving them a process by which to make disciples. Implementation of this plan should create a new passion for disciple-making at FBCG. Everyone who becomes a member of the church can participate, giving everyone an opportunity to follow their God-given passion while being firmly attached to a local church body.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to develop a disciple-making process at First Baptist Church of Garrettsville, Ohio.

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<sup>3</sup> Gray, “Purpose Statement.”



## **Goals**

The following goals represented a pathway to successful development of a new FBCG disciple-making process.

1. The first goal was to assess the current disciple-making practices among members and regular attendees of First Baptist Church of Garrettsville.
2. The second goal was to develop a 12-segment curriculum that equipped FBCG members and regular attendees to implement the “Teach, Preach, Heal” process in their daily lives.
3. The third goal was to develop a ministry plan to facilitate disciple-making efforts for FBCG members.

A specific research methodology was created to measure the successful completion of these three goals.<sup>4</sup> The research methodology and instruments used to measure the success of each goal are detailed in the following section.

## **Research Methodology**

The first goal was to assess the current disciple-making practices among members and regular attendees of First Baptist Church of Garrettsville. This goal was measured by administering the Disciple Making Practices Survey (DMPS) to determine the frequency, quality, and quantity of the disciple-making habits of FBCG members and regular attendees.<sup>5</sup> To be considered successful, 90 percent of the adult congregation needed to complete a pre- and post-training Disciple Making Practices Survey. I desired 35 completed pre- and post-training surveys, but only 21 were properly done. This goal was not successfully reached; however, the information gleaned from the completed surveys was still valuable for understanding the congregation.

The second goal was to develop a 12-segment curriculum that equipped FBCG members and regular attendees to implement the “Teach, Preach, Heal” process in their

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<sup>4</sup> All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

<sup>5</sup> See appendix 3.

daily lives.<sup>6</sup> This goal was measured by an expert panel who used a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum.<sup>7</sup> The goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level.

The third goal was to develop a ministry plan to facilitate disciple-making efforts for FBCG members.<sup>8</sup> This goal was measured by an expert panel utilized a rubric to evaluate the functionality of the plan, communication processes, training elements, provision of discipleship resources, and action steps.<sup>9</sup> The goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of all the rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficiency level.

### **Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations**

The following definitions of key terms were used in the ministry project:

*Disciple-making.* Disciple-making is the process of helping people become believers in Jesus Christ who heed the command to make disciples (Matt 28:18). In *Designed to Lead*, Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck contend disciples are leaders in the home, church, and community.<sup>10</sup>

Two limitations applied to this project. The willingness and ability of members to attend all twelve hours of training had the potential to impact the overall effectiveness of the project and its results. To mitigate this limitation, training was offered in several different formats, including individual meetings if and when needed. Second, a high level of participation in the pre- and post-surveys was important to enable measurement of the

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<sup>6</sup> See appendix 5 for the curriculum outline and appendix 6 for the teacher's notes.

<sup>7</sup> See appendix 1.

<sup>8</sup> See appendix 7.

<sup>9</sup> See appendix 2.

<sup>10</sup> Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development* (Nashville: B & H, 2016).

success of the overall project. To mitigate this limitation, the surveys were offered several times until an acceptable number of responses was received.

Two delimitations were placed on the project. First, the project included members and regular attendees of FBCG Bible study or Sunday worship services. Second, the project was confined to a thirty-week time frame. Enough time was allotted to allow everyone involved to complete various aspects of the project.

### **Conclusion**

Developing a structured disciple-making process for FBCG is a timely and fruitful venture. Every church should know how they are going to obey the command of our Lord and Savior Jesus to make disciples. To that end, chapter 2 examines Matthew 9:35–38 and related Scripture in order to show a method Jesus used to make disciples. Chapter 3 includes a brief survey of relevant disciple-making literature to confirm that the Gospel of Matthew provides a timeless and reproducible model for making disciples. Chapter 4 describes the process of preparing for and implementing the project and provides an account of the three project goals and their results. Chapter 5 evaluates the purpose, goals, strengths, and weaknesses of this project, shares recommendations for enhancing the work that has been presented, and offers theological and personal observations from my experience with this task.

CHAPTER 2  
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS  
FOR THE PROJECT

The church needs to follow Jesus’s disciple-making process. This chapter examines Matthew 9:35–38 and related Scripture in order to show a method Jesus used to make disciples. The Bible emphasizes three terms that reveal the general components of Jesus’s methodology in gathering, training, and deploying his core disciples. Those terms are *teaching*, *preaching*, and *healing*.

Matthew 9:35–38 is part of an *inclusio* beginning in Matthew 4:23.<sup>1</sup> This chapter will frequently comment on the material between Matthew 4:23 and Matthew 10:5 to show Matthew’s purposeful connection of Scripture within this section. The words teach, preach, and heal will be defined as they are used in this portion of the Bible. The importance of recognizing the sometimes semi-technical and/or pointed use of particular words will be acknowledged, as that will impact the reader’s ability to understand the implications of what has been recorded.

It is significant and necessary that a disciple-making process for a church that seeks to imitate how Jesus went about making disciples would include teaching, preaching, and healing.

**Matthew 9:35–38**

Matthew 9:35–38 provides a clear summary of the activity Jesus practiced in His early earthly ministry:

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<sup>1</sup> R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 370–71.

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”

Donald Hagner says,

This passage offers the reader three images of Jesus. The first is of him wandering about cities and villages, carrying out his ministry of teaching, preaching and healing (v. 35) The second is of him seeking the crowds and feeling compassion for them (v. 36). The third is of him speaking to his disciples, explaining the situation and what they must do (vv. 37–8).<sup>2</sup>

Ulrich Luz notes these verses are a “summarizing inclusion in relation to 4:23–25.”<sup>3</sup>

In fact, verses 9:35–38 are a connector between two sections that contain two of the five teaching discourses found in the Gospel of Matthew. Commentators are somewhat divided on whether it is best to understand the passage as joined to the Scripture preceding it because it closely resembles Matthew 4:23 or as part of the following section. R. T. France articulates the problem well:

This transitional paragraph serves both as a summary of the ministry in word and deed which has been depicted in chs. 5–9 and as an introduction to the theme of mission which follows. Its first verse closely echoes the language of 4:23 which introduced the Galilean ministry, thus forming a framework around the anthology of words and deeds which Matthew has put together. Its closing verses provide the basis for the sending out of the Twelve as “workers in the harvest.” The paragraph as a whole could thus with equal appropriateness be bracketed either with what precedes it or with what follows, but I have chosen the latter because it provides the necessary justification for the sending out of the Twelve, and thus together with that pericope provides the setting and the audience for the discourse that follows, in much the same way that 4:23–5:2 introduces the first discourse.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33A (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 261.

<sup>3</sup> Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20: A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), 169.

<sup>4</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 370–71.

Charles Talbert does not link Matthew 4:23 and 9:35 together. He suggests that the idea of these verses framing chapters 5 through 9 somehow lessens the impact of there being five distinct teaching discourses in Matthew.<sup>5</sup>

Each of the five large discourse units in Matthew finishes with *καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς* in the Greek and can be translated “and when Jesus had finished.”<sup>6</sup> Similar phrasing is found in Matthew 7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, and 26:1. But the truth of separate teaching discourses does not mean you have to reject the concept of 4:23 and 9:35 forming an *inclusio*, which links all of the material between those verses.

In this chapter, there will be a both/and approach. In exegeting this passage, I will acknowledge that this is part of a unified whole and maintain that an understanding of the text before and after this paragraph of Matthew 9:35–38 would suffer in its absence. There is a definite relationship to what Matthew has written between 4:23 and 9:35.

Between 4:23 and 9:35, Matthew gives a well-ordered presentation of Jesus’s ministry activity in the days when He gathered and trained His earliest disciples. Chapters 5 through 7 include the Sermon on the Mount, the first of five teaching discourses found spread throughout Matthew. According to Craig Blomberg, this account is part of a mixing of discourse and narrative:

Chapters 5–9 sum up the essence of Jesus’ preaching (chaps. 5–7) and healing (chaps. 8–9) ministries. Chapters 10–12 focus on responses to the disciples (chap. 10) and to Jesus (chaps. 11–12). Matthew 13:1–16:20 highlights the growing polarization of that response, which triggers Jesus’ teaching in parables (13:1–52) and mission to the Gentiles (13:53–16:20).<sup>7</sup>

This unit of Scripture is a helpful picture of a model used by Jesus to make disciples.

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<sup>5</sup> Charles H. Talbert, *Matthew*, Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 29.

<sup>6</sup> David L. Turner, introduction to *Matthew*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), sec. “Literary Matters.”

<sup>7</sup> Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 89.

## Matthew 9:35

Matthew 9:35 records that “Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.”

### The Location of Jesus’s Ministry

Jesus is recorded as traveling around Galilee. Although this is not a particularly large geographical area, it did have a sizable population. After examining reports by the historian Josephus, D. A. Carson claims, “Galilee had 204 cities and villages, each with no fewer than fifteen thousand persons.”<sup>8</sup> Jesus had access to a very large number of people in this heavily populated region. Matthew suggests that Jesus’s work in this area is a fulfillment of Scripture: “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up” (Matt 4:14–16). The location of Jesus’s work also alludes to Isaiah 9:1–2:

Nevertheless the dimness *shall not be* such as *was* in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict *her by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. (emphasis original)

Charles Talbert points out, “The quotation gives scriptural justification for the geographical location of Jesus’s ministry.”<sup>9</sup> Matthew records events in a way to affirm that Jesus has unique authority. The Gospel writer carefully organizes his writing to demonstrate the comprehensiveness of the ministry of Jesus. Grant Osborne claims, “Jesus’s ministry is completely comprehensive; he has come for every person and

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<sup>8</sup> D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 9, *Matthew and Mark*, ed. Tremper Longman and David E. Garland, rev. ed (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 262.

<sup>9</sup> Talbert, *Matthew*, 62.

ministers to everyone with whom he comes in contact. Matthew may also be hinting here of a ministry beyond Galilee (as exemplified in his ministry in Gentile lands in 8:18, 23, 28–34). There is a universal aura here.”<sup>10</sup>

Within the geographical bounds of Galilee, Jesus is seen everywhere. He encounters people in a number of different locations, including the synagogues where He is said to have taught.

### **The Ministry of Jesus**

One of the keys to Jesus’s disciple-making was His masterful teaching. He always seemed prepared to share with various audiences in ways they were able to receive. Matthew highlighted how Jesus presented truth both systematically and with authority.

#### **Teaching**

As Jesus was going about his business, He consistently engaged in teaching. Matthew 4:23 and 9:35 mention that He taught in their synagogues. It was not unusual for itinerant preachers or rabbis to be allowed to speak in Jewish synagogues. However, as Grant Osborne notes, Matthew’s writing is unique in that “the opening verse 9:35 parallels 4:23 and frames chapters 5 through 9 with a summary of Jesus’ missionary activity and healing power. It also parallels 11:1 and establishes a two-step process that draws the section together around Jesus’s authority and compassion in his mission.”<sup>11</sup>

Matthew selects material that groups together lessons Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, which were authenticated immediately afterward by miracle stories. Blomberg remarks,

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<sup>10</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 365.

<sup>11</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 362.



Matthew 4:23–25 and 9:35 form a framework that surrounds the first pair of discourse and narrative in the body of Matthew’s work. In almost identical language these texts refer to Jesus’ widespread ministry of teaching and preaching, which the Sermon on the Mount classically epitomizes, and his healings, which the collection of the miracles in chaps. 8–9 amply illustrate.<sup>12</sup>

It is clear that the earliest of Jesus’s disciples were witnesses to His teaching, preaching, and healing. The disciples traveled around Galilee with Jesus, at first watching, then gradually participating with Jesus as He went about His mission. Matthew skillfully offers a picture of Jesus that reveals His plans for those that follow Him.

Hagner comments,

We go from Jesus wandering about cities and villages, to Jesus seeing the crowds, to Jesus speaking to his disciples. In this way the narrative naturally gives rise to 10:1–42. The task that the twelve are to perform (vv. 37–8 + 10:1–42) is rooted in Jesus’ compassion for the multitude (v. 36) and results from the need for the ministry of teaching, preaching and healing to be carried out by more than one individual (v.35).<sup>13</sup>

In this part of Matthew’s Gospel, the disciples are constantly exposed to the activity of Jesus and to His masterful teaching ministry.

In the summary of Jesus’s works, it may be noted that He taught in their synagogues. Leon Morris speculates Jesus was separating Himself from the religious establishment: “The *synagogues* were places of instruction as well as of worship; they were a natural place in which a teacher would do his work. *Their* has no discernible antecedent, but it perhaps distances Jesus from the synagogue establishment: it was *their* synagogue, not his.”<sup>14</sup>

The subject of Jesus’s teaching is apparently what He preached in Matthew 3:2 and 4:17, that is the “kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Carson mentions, “The ‘good news’ concerns the kingdom . . . whose “nearness” has already been announced . . . and which is the central subject of the Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5–7). . . . The ‘good news’

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<sup>12</sup> Blomberg, *Matthew*, 89.

<sup>13</sup> Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 261.

<sup>14</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 238 (emphasis original).

concerns God and the inbreaking of his saving reign in the person of his Son the Messiah.”<sup>15</sup>

Differentiating between teaching and preaching in Matthew 9:35 can be difficult. The Greek word translated teaching in most Bibles is διδάσκων. Moisés Silva points out in about a dozen passages that διδάσκω is used as a comprehensive term for Jesus’s preaching (e.g., Matt 4:23; Mark 2:13; Luke 4:15); elsewhere it denotes His ministry in given situations (e.g., Matt 5:2; Mark 1:21–22; Luke 5:3; John 6:59).<sup>16</sup> Jesus taught in a number of different venues including synagogues, the temple, and out in the open on mountainsides and plains. Silva acknowledges an important point:

In Matthew the emphasis seems to lie on the training of Jesus’ disciples, as is apparent from the prominence given to the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5–7). Here is the teacher of the *church* who supersedes the Sinaitic revelation and its rabb. interpretations (“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago,” 5:21 et. al.) in order to lay a new foundation (“But I tell you,” 5:22 et al.). The foundation guaranteed by him is not an innovative law, but the true fulfillment of the old, now freed from rabb. distortions . . . . This is why after his resurrection, this interpretation must be passed on through teaching (28:20).<sup>17</sup>

Jesus’s instruction clearly comes in His teaching and preaching to the disciples He gathered during His ministry.

## **Preaching**

In Matthew, there is a nearly seamless transition back and forth between instruction and proclamation. Teaching and preaching both instruct and announce the reality and meaning of the “kingdom of heaven” being near or at hand. The Greek word translated preaching is κηρύσσων. Jonathan Griffiths believes preaching is used here and other places in a narrow technical sense that is reserved for those who are specifically

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<sup>15</sup> Carson, *Matthew*, 263–64.

<sup>16</sup> *NIDNTTE*, 2:710–11.

<sup>17</sup> *NIDNTTE*, 2:711–12 (emphasis original).

called to “the authoritative public proclamation of the word by a commissioned leader.”<sup>18</sup> He notes there are many other “word” ministries in the New Testament but that the term used here for preaching is one of three terms that “are specialist terms in the New Testament that normally refer to preaching as a particular type of word ministry.”<sup>19</sup> Even with this restrictive understanding of preaching, Griffiths concludes,

The public proclamation of the word of God in the Christian assembly has a clear mandate from Scripture and occupies a place of central importance in the life of the local church. Preaching is necessary and vital—but not all-sufficient—for the nourishment and edification of the local church. All God’s people are ministers of his word, and a healthy church will be a church where all kinds of word ministries (formal and informal) flourish and abound.<sup>20</sup>

Blomberg says, “Preaching and healing sum up Matthew’s distinctive epitome of the ministry of Jesus and his disciples (4:23; cf. 9:35; 10:7–8), and each makes people confront the question of Jesus’ identity.”<sup>21</sup>

Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom. France claims, “The mention of ‘aiming the good news’ alongside ‘teaching’ in the synagogues is perhaps not simply repletion but rather distinguishes informal preaching to gathered crowds from the more formal opportunity to speak by invitation in a regular weekly assembly; the content is however unlikely to have differed significantly.”<sup>22</sup> This proclamation is something that is apparently passed along to the disciples. France observes that “similar terms will be used for the disciples’ derivative ministry in 10:7–8, though it may be significant that whereas

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<sup>18</sup> Jonathan I. Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament: An Exegetical and Biblical-Theological Study*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 42 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 132.

<sup>19</sup> Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament*, 132.

<sup>20</sup> Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament*, 133.

<sup>21</sup> Blomberg, *Matthew*, 89.

<sup>22</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 159.

they too are to ‘proclaim,’ Matthew never uses the verb ‘teach’ of the disciples until after Jesus (the ‘one teacher,’ 23:8, 10) is no longer present (28:20).”<sup>23</sup>

As Jesus begins this phase of ministry, Matthew 4:17 records, “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Robert Mounce comments,

Verse 17 marks a transition. From that time on is a semi-technical phrase indicating a new beginning. The new beginning is the public ministry. The Greek word translated preach (*kerysso*) means “to proclaim” as a herald (*keryx*). Matthew’s summary of Jesus’ message parallels that of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:2); Galileans are to turn away from their sins because the long awaited kingdom of heaven is near.<sup>24</sup>

In chapters 5 through 7, Jesus preaches and teaches. Some of His sayings seem brand new while others are clearly building on and intensifying past knowledge. His preaching demands a turning-in attitude and action. The intertwined nature of the teaching and preaching is well summarized in a long quotation from Luz:

All of that means that from the perspective of the entire Gospel the proclamation of the kingdom and the teaching about the behavior that God desires cannot be separated from one another, nor can the two of them be separated from Jesus. Even if the two terms can have very different connotations based on their traditional range of meaning, they belong together. Jesus’ “teaching” on the mount—his commandments—is also the missions proclamation of his disciples (28:20). For that reason it is directed not only to the disciples but also to the people (7:28\*; cf. 5:1\*). Jesus’ ethical Sermon on the Mount does not presuppose the gospel of the kingdom—it is the gospel of the kingdom. It thus follows that preaching and teaching in Matthew are not related as promise of salvation and imperative, because the imperative is also the goal of the “proclamation,” and the “teaching” also points to the kingdom. From their traditional usage the two terms have different connotations, but in Matthew the substance is the same.<sup>25</sup>

The preaching recorded by Matthew is portrayed as more than strong words and persuasive argument. It is backed up by powerful demonstration that what Jesus was saying is good news.

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<sup>23</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 150.

<sup>24</sup> Robert H. Mounce, *Matthew*, New International Biblical Commentary 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 33.

<sup>25</sup> Luz, *Matthew*, 64–65.

## Healing

Healing is the third of three terms used to summarize Jesus’s activity in Matthew 9:35. The Greek word is *θεραπεύων*. In antiquity, its most common meaning is “to render service or homage, serve a divinity,” and the secondary meaning listed is “heal, restore.”<sup>26</sup> The primary use of the word in Matthew is “heal, restore.” Both in 9:35 and 4:23, Jesus heals “every sickness and every disease.” The importance of healing in the disciple-making process is best understood by looking at Matthew 4:23–9:38 as a unit. According to David Turner, “It was crucial for Matthew’s Christian Jewish community to take up their mission to disciple not only their own nation (10:5–6) but also all the nations (24:14; 28:19). Matthew, therefore, presents Jesus not only as the Messiah of all nations but also as the model for ministry that brings the Messiah to all the nations.”<sup>27</sup>

Matthew organizes his writing to display what Jesus taught and preached while gathering His earliest disciples and how He showed both authority and compassion in the process. Chapters 5 through 7 recount Jesus’s teaching/preaching ministry, while chapters 8 through 9 focus on the healing and miracle-working that even blind men could see meant Jesus was the “son of David” (Matt 9:27).

Matthew ordered his material, and as Blomberg describes,

These accounts are arranged into three groups of three stories each. All but one of the miracles involve physical healings of various individuals. The lone exception, the stilling of the storm, is probably to be seen as a kind of exorcism . . . and thus a “healing” of nature appropriate for this collection of miracles. In between the three triads appear two pairs of passages dealing with discipleship.<sup>28</sup>

The outline below reflects the organization of chapters 8 and 9.

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<sup>26</sup> BDAG, 453.

<sup>27</sup> Turner, *Matthew*, 236–37.

<sup>28</sup> Blomberg, *Matthew*, 137.

## Jesus demonstrates his authority and compassion

### Healings

Healing a leper (8:2–4)

Healing a paralytic (8:5–13)

Healing a fever and other miracles (8:14–16)

Reference to prophetic fulfillment (8:17)

Cost of discipleship illustrated (8:18–22)

### Healings/miracles

Stopping the storm (8:23–27)

Demon exorcisms (8:28–9:1)

Healing paralytic (9:2–8)

Cost of discipleship illustrated

Call of Matthew (9:9)

Eating with sinners (9:10–13)

Breaking traditions of fasting (9:14–17)

### Healings/miracles

Raising dead girl and healing blood flow (9:18–25)

Healing two blind men (9:27–31)

Healing a speechless demoniac (9:32–34)<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Talbert, *Matthew*, 111. Almost every source I used had some type of outline of this material, but the one that I have used here, while unique, is most like one provided by Charles Talbert. This outline is meant to emphasize that Matthew arranged his recounting of this material to, in part, show how Jesus trained his early disciples.

It is clear Matthew did not line up these particular events haphazardly but had a plan and a purpose. Talbert claims,

These deeds are signs of the coming of God to reclaim the creation corrupted by evil powers; they are, moreover, signs of what God's kingdom will be like when fully actualized. This context is provided by the Scriptures and later hopes of the Jewish people. In performing his mighty deeds, the Matthean Jesus is saying that in him the hopes of Israel are being actualized.<sup>30</sup>

The accounts of healing serve to identify and declare the coming of the king. His mastery over everything from nature to demons, sickness, and even death indicated Jesus was the person Scripture spoke of: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" (Isa 53:4).

The systematic recounting of healings with interspersed talk of discipleship seems to be doing more than just showing Jesus is powerful or compassionate; it is also indicating the kingdom of God is near. David Turner asserts,

The use of Isa. 53:4 in Matt. 8:17 has led to much debate over the relationship of Jesus's ministry and death to physical healing (cf. Mayhue 1995). A broad, biblical-theological view of sickness and death helps to resolve this question. Pain, illness, and death were originally rooted in sin (Gen. 3), and redemption from sin will ultimately result in the redemption of the body (Rom. 8:23) and the end of pain (Rev. 21:4). Matthew views the healings and exorcisms performed by Jesus as evidence for the presence of God's reign, which anticipates a glorious future reality (Matt. 11:2–6; 12:28–29; 19:28). Therefore, Matthew links Jesus's healing of physical illnesses to his substitutionary death for sinners (1:21; 20:28; 26:28). As indications of kingdom authority, the healings are tokens of the ultimate eschatological results of Jesus's redemption.<sup>31</sup>

Turner is also careful to note that he is not suggesting that healing is a part of the atonement: "The point of the miracles is to stress Jesus's unique messianic authority, not the therapeutic blessings he brings to his people."<sup>32</sup> Jesus can command His followers to make disciples because He has been given "all authority" (Matt 28:18). Jesus behaves

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<sup>30</sup> Talbert, *Matthew*, 126.

<sup>31</sup> Turner, *Matthew*, 235.

<sup>32</sup> Turner, *Matthew*, 236.

and speaks in ways that demonstrate He was right when He made a bold proclamation in a Nazareth Synagogue, as Luke records,

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. When he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. (Luke 4:16–21)

Jesus’s unique accomplishments in the preceding chapters were a clear indication of a message that was being communicated. Carson says,

That simple truth—that Jesus truly is the promised Messiah and is utterly trustworthy in discharging all that is bound up with that mission—should be a marvelous encouragement to believers today. If he came to save his people from their sin (1:21), will he not do so? If his purpose as the Messiah is to bring in the blessings of the consummated kingdom, will he not achieve it? If even now his mission is to give foretastes of what it will be like when both sin and the effects of sin are removed by his life-transforming authority, shall we not witness such foretastes ourselves? He is utterly trustworthy in meeting the purposes for which he came; and those purposes are bound up with the good of his people.<sup>33</sup>

Jesus teaches in an authoritative manner, boldly preaches how the kingdom should function, and then demonstrates that He has the power to rule such an amazing kingdom. Matthew says Jesus went about “healing every sickness and every disease among the people” (Matt 9:35). Jesus did all that while still showing He loved those who were desperately in need of Him.

### **Matthew 9:36**

Matthew 9:36 records, “But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.”

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<sup>33</sup> D. A. Carson, *Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: An Exposition of Matthew 5–10* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 226.



## Compassion

As Jesus goes from one place to another demonstrating He is the prophesied Messiah, He perceives the condition of the masses following Him. Jesus does not merely use the masses to prove His identity and authority. Jesus was “moved with compassion.” France believes Jesus had a strong reaction to what He saw:

His response is described by the strongly emotional Greek verb *splanchnizomai*, which speaks of a warm, compassionate response to need. No single English term does justice to it: compassion, pity, sympathy, fellow-feeling all convey part of it, but “his heart went out” perhaps represents more fully the emotional force of the underlying metaphor of a “gut response.” A further feature of this verb appears through a comparison with its other uses in Matthew (14:14; 15:32; 18:27; 20:34): in each case there is not only sympathy with a person’s need, but also a practical response which meets that need; emotion results in caring and effective action, in this case the action of sending out his disciples among the people. It is a verb which describes the Jesus of the gospel stories in a nutshell.<sup>34</sup>

This emotional response comes because Jesus perceives the people He has come to care for have been abandoned by those who should have been protecting them.

According to Carson,

Like Yahweh in the OT (c.f. Eze. 34), Jesus showed compassion on the shepherdless crowds and judgment on the false leaders. The “sheep” Jesus sees are “harassed” (not “fainted” [KJV], which has poor attestation), i.e., bullied, oppressed. In the face of such problems, they are “helpless,” unable to rescue themselves or escape their tormentors.<sup>35</sup>

Once again Jesus indicates He is the fulfillment of Scripture by demonstrating His concern for the people of God. France writes,

The sheep/shepherd image is frequent in the OT, primarily for the relationship between God and his people but also with regard to their need for human leadership under God; in this gospel the metaphor has already occurred in 2:6, and will be picked up in the mission to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” in 10:6; 15:24 cf. also the parable of the shepherd in 18:12–14. Such a description is reminiscent of Ezek. 34:1–16 where the sheep are oppressed and scattered because of the failure of the “shepherds of Israel,” so that it is necessary for God himself to seek out and rescue the lost sheep.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 373.

<sup>35</sup> Carson, *Matthew*, 456.

<sup>36</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 372.

Jesus is mindful of the multitudes that are evident all around Him and those He is training for ministry. He recognized their condition and related that condition to Israel's past. Then, in verse 9:37, Matthew changes the metaphor while talking about the people. Jesus now refers to the multitudes as the harvest.

### **Matthew 9:37**

Matthew 9:37 reads, "Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few."

### **Harvest**

When Jesus views the hurting and helpless people, He sees a large harvest.

Turner says,

Jesus's compassion for needy Israel is now expressed by another metaphor, that of the harvest. Israel's situation is likened to a bountiful harvest without sufficient workers (cf. Luke 10:2; Charette 1990; Legrande 1965). If the shepherdless-flock imagery expresses the desperation of Israel's situation, the harvest imagery expresses the urgency of this desperation (Garland 1993:109).<sup>37</sup>

According to Douglas Hare, the use of harvest as a metaphor suggests a missionary purpose is in view:

Although Matthew elsewhere uses the harvest as a metaphor for the last judgement (13:24–34, 36–43; see also Rev. 14:14–20). It must here refer to missionary outreach, as in the earlier source from which he draws the saying (see Luke 10:2; cf. also Rom. 1:13; 1 Cor 3:6). The two uses overlap, however. Those who gather fruit now do so in anticipation of the final harvest. This is explicit in John's use of the image (John 4:35–38).<sup>38</sup>

Jesus indicates that the people of God, His people, are like helpless sheep who are not receiving proper care. He shows His disciples His activity is not just about demonstrating His authority. Jesus cares about those that need Him. The things Jesus

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<sup>37</sup> Turner, *Matthew*, 263.

<sup>38</sup> Douglas R. A. Hare, *Matthew*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 108.

does are a model for the disciples and subsequent followers to emulate. Blomberg declares,

The unreached people of his world need more preachers and ministers of the gospel. Jesus can personally encounter only a small number, so he will commission his followers to begin to reach the rest. Even then many more will be needed (cf. his sending of the seventy-two in Luke 10:1–2). Verses 37–38 have rightfully led Christians in all ages to pray for, call, and send men and women into all kinds of ministries. The need remains as urgent as ever, with billions who have not heard the gospel or seen it implemented holistically.<sup>39</sup>

The Bible often refers to the harvest of the last times. The mission of announcing the arrival of the king and the kingdom is wrapped up in the events that accompany the flow of biblical reckoning of the time Jesus walked the earth. William Davies and Dale Allison note,

Everywhere else in the synoptic tradition, as in the prophets and Jewish apocalyptic literature, the harvest is typically a metaphor for the divine judgement, and the harvesters, those that gather, are God and the angels. . . . Here, however, the harvest is a metaphor for mission, and the disciples of Jesus, with their preaching of the kingdom, are the harvesters. So the eschatological harvest has been moved from the future to the present (cf. Dodd, *Parables*, pp. 143–4).<sup>40</sup>

This present sense of the harvest metaphor is one that seems to point to a readiness for there to be those who obey the king in spreading the good news of the arrival and expectations of the soon returning king. Carson explains,

Jesus is speaking here to “his disciples,” which many take to refer to the Twelve. More likely, “his disciples” designates a larger group exhorted to ask (vs. 38) that the Lord of the harvest . . . will thrust laborers into his therismou (here in the sense “harvest field”). By contrast, the Twelve are immediately commissioned as workers (10:1–4). This interpretation best fits 10:1: Jesus “called his twelve disciples to him.” The clause is clumsy if they are the same as the “disciples” of vv. 37–38 and natural only if they are part of the larger group.<sup>41</sup>

This is the large harvest in which Jesus calls for workers to participate. The Master says the laborers who have acknowledged the call to work so far are “few” (Matt

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<sup>39</sup> Blomberg, *Matthew*, 167.

<sup>40</sup> William D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, vol. 2, *Matthew 8–18*, International Critical Commentary (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 146.

<sup>41</sup> Carson, *Matthew*, 457.

9:37). This is an indication that Jesus does not intend to do the work of spreading the gospel of the kingdom without the assistance of others. This is an extension of the compassionate work of Jesus. John Nolland writes,

From Matthew's early church perspective the provision of those who will extend and continue the ministry of Jesus is of profound importance. Compassion involves so identifying with the situation of others that one is prepared to act for their benefit. Apart from 18:27, in a parable (where compassion leads to forgiveness of debt), in Matthew compassion always addresses the physical needs of people, and so it will be in the ministry to which the disciples are called.<sup>42</sup>

### **Matthew 9:38**

Since there are few workers prepared to work in the harvest field, Jesus calls them to pray: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matt 9:38).

### **Prayer**

Jesus commands those who have been following Him to implore the Lord of the harvest for help. Nolland points out,

In the present imagery God has become the owner-manager of the farmland who employs farm workers to harvest the crop. There is an urgent need for sufficient workers to be able to harvest the crop before it spoils. No specific identity should be given to the "few" existing workers: the focus is on the need for additional resources. The coming commissioning and direction of the Twelve will indicate something of what is involved in "harvesting" (but we have also been seeing Jesus do it). The challenge to prayer, however, implies the need to call others beyond the Twelve into this task as well. Perhaps we can also draw from the prayer focus here an indication that Jesus' action in chap. 10 is to be seen as an expression of the will of the Lord of the harvest.<sup>43</sup>

Jesus had forecast that He would include His disciples in the work. France claims that in Matthew 4:19,

He [Jesus] had given warning to his first disciples that they too would share this role, and now is the time for them to take up their responsibility as fishers and harvesters of people for God's kingship. Yet the immediate and explicit appeal to

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<sup>42</sup> John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 406.

<sup>43</sup> Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 407.

them is not as yet to go out and reap, but to pray for reapers. The one will lead to the other. And those who pray (or at least some of them: “disciples” here may be wider than the Twelve who are yet to be singled out) will turn out in the next pericope to be the ones who go in answer to that prayer. The eschatological reaping by angels (13:39, 41; cf. 24:31) must be preceded by the sending of human messengers. The term “Lord of the harvest” is in itself merely a part of the human imagery, the man in charge of the harvest operation, but in this context, and following a command to “ask,” the reader is expected to recognize the Kyrios as God, whose harvest of people is ready for gathering.<sup>44</sup>

Matthew seems to have been very intentional in the material he included leading up to encouraging this prayer for workers. In Matthew 6, Jesus taught those following Him to pray “thy kingdom come” and “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory” (Matt 6:10, 13). Grant Osborne believes,

Matt. 9:35–38 functions as a theological primer to the Mission Discourse. Jesus begins by telling his disciples that the mission is a part of his ministry (9:35) and a result of his compassion (v. 36). His teaching and deeds were the focus of chs. 5–9, and they are framed by the summaries of 4:23 and 9:35. Moreover, the call to the disciples to pray for workers is continued in 10:1–4, where Jesus commissions them to be the very workers for whom they have prayed.<sup>45</sup>

The plea for prayer for laborers to be thrust into the work seems to be something that should go on as long as there is a harvest to be reaped. Jesus appears to be teaching the disciples to seek help by reaching out to the Lord of the harvest.

Once again, Matthew’s compilation and arrangement of this material demonstrates its importance to today’s audience. The order and emphasis of the writing is a teaching tool for those who would later read this account. France writes,

In all, we seem to have here a typically Matthean anthology of Jesus’ teaching on the realities of being a disciple with a mission to an indifferent or hostile world. Much of the compilation relates appropriately to this initial mission of the disciples during Jesus’ lifetime (though v.18 envisages a wider sphere of mission than is set out in vv. 5–6 and 23), but its relevance to Christian disciples in subsequent generations would have been as obvious to Matthew’s first readers as it was presumably to the author himself.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 374.

<sup>45</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 363.

<sup>46</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 373.

This prayer becomes the fulcrum God chooses to thrust the disciples into doing the ministry the way Jesus would have them—the way He had been demonstrating.

### **Conclusion**

Matthew 9:35–38 is a pivotal section of Scripture that demonstrates Matthew intended, at least in part, to show how Jesus trained His disciples. It also provides what future disciple-makers could use as a model. The section is the latter part of an *inclusio* that starts with Matthew 4:23. It is of note that between Matthew 4:23 and 9:35–38, Jesus carried out all the elements mentioned in those verses.

The message contained in those elements can be said to emphasize teaching, preaching, and healing. After choosing His earliest followers, Jesus toured an area containing more than two hundred villages, teaching in local synagogues, preaching about the kingdom of heaven, and healing every kind of disease among the people. In so doing, He amply demonstrated that He had the authority to command allegiance because He was the long-awaited Messiah.

Jesus preached, “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 4:17b). While teaching, preaching, and healing, Jesus was accompanied by His earliest disciples. In 4:18, He promised to make Peter and Andrew “fishers of men.” Very soon after, James and John had answered the challenge to walk closely with Jesus. This call to discipleship allowed them and a few others to have an up-close look at the Master as He performed His ministry. The crowds grew into multitudes at times while Jesus taught, among other things, the material contained in what we commonly call the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5–7).

Not only did Jesus teach in a way that seemed unprecedented in front of His disciples, He also healed. Jesus showed compassion on the multitudes and demonstrated a deep sense of caring and concern for all kinds of people. Matthew arranged the material in an orderly fashion that seems to be a logical progression. Jesus turns a group of men

into fully committed disciples: they hear His call, watch His behavior against the backdrop of the writings of Scripture, and are told to ask for help in reaping a harvest of souls the Master has pointed out. In chapter 10, Jesus sends out those He empowers to do what He had been doing.

Matthew 9:35–38 looks back at Jesus’s modeling for those that follow Him a process He used to disciple them and looks forward to a process they can use to disciple others. By implication, this disciple multiplication methodology is to be passed forward and encompass both Jews and Gentiles. Disciples are those who are being and have been taught. Disciples proclaim the good news and hear the good news preached by others. Disciples take part in the healing ministry of Jesus, authenticating the reality of the risen Lord and demonstrating compassion for the hurting and those who have no shepherd to lovingly guide them. Matthew 9:35–38 is the essence of Jesus’s disciple-making process recorded by the author of the Gospel. The elements of this process are meant to be reproduced by Jesus’s followers until He returns. Jesus says in Matthew 28:19–20, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

CHAPTER 3  
THEORETICAL, PRACTICAL, AND HISTORICAL  
ISSUES RELATED TO THE PROJECT

The church must declare and demonstrate the gospel in order to effectively make disciples. Part of the task of creating a disciple-making process for First Baptist Church of Garrettsville is clarifying what is meant by the terms disciple and disciple-making. The preceding chapter focused on exegeting Matthew 9:35–38 to find how Jesus developed some of His earliest disciples. This chapter will include a brief survey of relevant disciple-making literature to confirm that the Gospel of Matthew provides a timeless and reproducible model for making disciples.

When used as a noun in this section, the meaning of disciple will agree with Michael J. Wilkins, who says,

*Disciple* is the primary term used in the Gospels to refer to Jesus' followers and is a common referent for those known in the early church as *believers*, *Christians*, *brothers/sisters*, *those of the Way*, or *saints*, although each term focuses upon different aspects of the individual's relationship with Jesus and others of the faith. The term was used most frequently in this specific sense; at least 230 times in the Gospels . . . and 28 times in Acts.<sup>1</sup>

A disciple is known by what he or she does, as Wilkins points out, “hence, in the Christian sense, a disciple of Jesus is one who has come to him for eternal life, has claimed him as Savior and God, and has embarked upon the life of following him.”<sup>2</sup>

Following Him also implies leading others to become disciples as well. This disciple-making process is a methodical way of helping ourselves and others be disciples.

Wilkins continues,

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<sup>1</sup> Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: Biblical Theology of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 40 (emphasis original).

<sup>2</sup> Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 41.



Thus, when we speak of Christian discipleship and discipling we are speaking of what it means to grow as a Christian in every area of life. Since *disciple* is a common referent for *Christian*, discipleship and discipling imply the process of becoming like Jesus Christ. Discipleship and discipling mean living a fully human life in this world in union with Jesus Christ and growing in conformity to his image.<sup>3</sup>

There have been and are numerous ways that people have approached the task of making disciples. In Matthew 9:35–38, the Gospel writer summarizes a methodology used by Jesus.

### A Jesus Way

Matthew writes,

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, the harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. (Matt 9:35–38 [emphasis original])

It should be noted that the Gospel writer tells us that in His earliest disciple-making efforts, Jesus went to where people were. He taught in synagogues, preached the gospel, and healed people in cities and villages spread around Galilee. Jesus did not restrict Himself to a particular kind of setting, but did what was appropriate in whatever setting He was operating.

It is tempting to say that Jesus demonstrated the Great Commission by sharing as He was going. Some have translated the Great Commission found in Matthew 28 as telling Christians, “As you are going, make disciples.” *The Disciple’s Study Bible: New International Version* says,

Jesus’ Great Commission includes the command to baptize. The sequence of His commands is important. Beginning with a participle (as you are going), Jesus used the imperative “make disciples of all nations.” This command is followed immediately by “baptizing them,” showing that in this way they were identified to the world as His followers.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 41–42 (emphasis original).

<sup>4</sup> *Disciple’s Study Bible* (Nashville: Holman Bible, 1988), s.v. “Matthew 28.”

The “as you are going” phrase in the quote above is not a particularly good translation. Benjamin Merkle points out,

Although some maintain that the aorist participle πορευθεντες in Matthew 28:19 should be viewed as a temporal (adverbial) participle and should therefore be translated “as you go,” the best evidence supports taking it as a participle of attendant circumstance. As such, the participle mirrors the main verb, which in this case is an imperative and therefore the participle should be translated as an imperative.<sup>5</sup>

So, disciple-making is more than being available to God as you live your life. Wherever the Sovereign God has placed a person at this moment can be viewed as a place of assignment for fulfilling the Great Commission. Christians are to actively respond to being sent by the “Lord of the harvest.” How Jesus demonstrated that remains a viable option for us to emulate today.

Disciple-making is not an activity relegated to the super Christian or the specially-called clergy. It is a task assigned to all who are followers of Christ. Robert Coleman reminds us,

The Great Commission is not a special calling or a gift of the Spirit; it is a command—an obligation incumbent upon the whole community of faith. There are no exceptions. Bank presidents and automobile mechanics, physicians and schoolteachers, theologians and homemakers—everyone who believes on Christ has a part in His work (John 14:12).<sup>6</sup>

One successful model of making disciples that make disciples can be captured by carefully observing what is recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. The *inclusio* of Matthew 4:23 to 9:35 uses the phrase “teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people” (Matt 9:35). The labels of teaching, preaching, and healing provide a way to structure disciple-making in the church that encourages obedience to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20). Although intimately related and smoothly blended together in the ministry of

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<sup>5</sup> Benjamin L. Merkle, *Exegetical Gems from Biblical Greek: A Refreshing Guide to Grammar and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 99.

<sup>6</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *Master Plan of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2020), 12.

Jesus, it is helpful to look at teaching, preaching, and healing separately and how they mesh together. This reveals a holistic methodology that is flexible and comprehensive as an approach to disciple-making. This concept is reflective of best practices culled from the literature of various noted church practitioners.

## Teaching

Any form of effective disciple-making will contain elements of teaching and/or training. Disciples are learners who are called to grow in the practical knowledge of knowing how to walk in the ways of Christ. Bill Hull gives a list of what he calls competencies that are found in a disciple produced by the gospel: “A disciple submits to a teacher who teaches him or her how to follow Jesus. A disciple learns Jesus’ words. A disciple learns Jesus’ way of ministry. A disciple imitates Jesus’ life and character. A disciple finds and teaches other disciples for Jesus.”<sup>7</sup>

Teaching is a fundamental part of the disciple-making efforts of churches and individuals who seek to make healthy disciples of Jesus Christ. Gary Bredfeldt claims, “The church is fundamentally a teaching-learning organization. Its future depends on the effectiveness of its leaders and members as they function as both teachers and learners.”<sup>8</sup> He considers teaching a core skill for leaders: “Teaching is at the very heart and center of Christ’s commission to the church.”<sup>9</sup>

Disciple-makers are to make disciples of all nations, “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matt 28:20). The act of teaching is not optional for Christians. It is a command. What do you teach to make disciples? And how do you teach it?

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<sup>7</sup> Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2006), 47.

<sup>8</sup> Gary Bredfeldt, *Great Leader, Great Teacher: Recovering the Biblical Vision for Leadership* (Chicago: Moody, 2006), 16.

<sup>9</sup> Bredfeldt, *Great Leader, Great Teacher*, 27.

In the Gospel of Matthew, some of what and how Jesus taught in the process of making disciples is revealed. Often called the Sermon on the Mountain, chapters 5 through 7 provide what Jesus's disciples were exposed to as they followed the Master to all kinds of places, including synagogues and hillsides.

Matthew compiles a series of sayings that announce and teach about the ministry of Jesus. According to McKnight,

The Sermon on the Mount, when read from the special contextual clues Matthew provides at 4:23–25 and 9:35, which in Matthew's narrative is a sketch of Jesus' teaching, preaching, and healing ministries, is just that: *it is a compelling presentation of Jesus and his moral vision*. Pushed to the next level, what this means is that *reading or teaching or preaching the Sermon on the Mount is evangelism*.<sup>10</sup>

McKnight believes, "By presenting Jesus as that new Moses, Matthew is laying down a messianic claim for Jesus. This new kind of teacher is the messianic, new Moses."<sup>11</sup>

The teaching speaks of the way things ought to be understood. Carson says there is an over-arching theme presented in the Sermon on the Mount:

It is the kingdom of heaven, then, that is the great theme of the Sermon on the Mount. At the end of Matthew 4 we learn that Jesus went throughout Galilee "preaching the good news of the kingdom" (4:23). Both his preaching and his miracles of healing attracted large crowds to him. Accordingly Matthew 5 opens with the words, "Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them."<sup>12</sup>

Jonathan Pennington notes that in the Gospel of Matthew, "The Sermon comes to us historically, literarily, and theologically in the context of Israel's story and self-understanding."<sup>13</sup> Pennington states,

Specifically, Jesus and the authors of the New Testament see themselves as part of the grand story of God's creation and redeeming work in the world, a world that had a beginning and will have an end, or at least a renewed beginning. . . . The tension

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<sup>10</sup> Scot McKnight, *Sermon on the Mount*, Story of God Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 25 (emphasis original).

<sup>11</sup> McKnight, *Sermon on the Mount*, 25.

<sup>12</sup> D. A. Carson, *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: An Exposition of Matthew 5–10* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 15.

<sup>13</sup> Jonathan T. Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 25.

of the story is that humanity fails in both its love for him and love for one another, resulting in a darkening of mind and heart and ultimately death, rather than flourishing life. God then sets in motion the mysterious, arduous, and long-term plan for the reversal of this state, beginning with Abraham and flowing through his descendants.<sup>14</sup>

There is then the duty to proclaim what God is doing, has done, and wants done in the earth.

### **Preaching**

Jesus's process of making disciples includes preaching, or proclaiming, the good news of the kingdom. The arrival of the King and His kingdom has great implications for disciple-making. The process Matthew illustrated shows how Jesus declared what leads to human flourishing. Pennington points out that the instructional method in the Sermon on the Mount has roots in Greco-Roman and early Christian thinking:

This great tradition, with its emphasis on ethics as virtue, a way of being in the world aiming at flourishing, bequeaths to all in its wake a robust vision for society's flourishing as achieved through paideia. For society to flourish, its leaders must embark on a virtue-developing program of paideia, or whole-person education. This paideia approach to education and instruction is driven by the goal of shaping people into the beautiful Ideal.<sup>15</sup>

What is this good news, this gospel that must be preached? What must be shared for the content to be considered the gospel? Greg Gilbert claims,

But the important thing to understand is that there were in fact some core truths of the gospel, and from the sermons and letters preserved to us we have a very good idea of what those core truths were—and are. In Romans, in 1 Corinthians, in the sermons of Acts, and throughout the New Testament, the earliest Christians structured their declaration of the good news around a few critical truths.

First the bad news: God is your Judge, and you have sinned against him. And then the gospel: but Jesus has died so that sinners may be forgiven of their sins if they will repent and believe in him.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing*, 25.

<sup>15</sup> Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing*, 36.

<sup>16</sup> Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Gospel?*, 9Marks Series (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 36.

Gilbert seems to limit the good news to things pointing directly and immediately to man. Inadvertently, his idea of the gospel has a narrow scope. Gilbert goes as far as to say a sermon by the apostle Paul was not the gospel and that he must have shared the good news with some listeners later. Gilbert writes, “Paul’s sermon in Acts 17 is often cited as a model for preaching the good news to a pagan culture. But there’s something very interesting and unusual about that sermon. Look at it carefully and you start to realize that Paul doesn’t really proclaim the good news of Christ at all, just the bad news!”<sup>17</sup>

But there is more to the gospel than just the plan of salvation. There is the good news of the kingdom that was preached by Jesus. There is the story that is consistent with the Old Testament writings. Wrenching out and isolating the facts of the death, burial, and resurrection and making them only about personal salvation is to impoverish the grand narrative that is the good news. Jesus clearly understood there was continuity between His earthly work and what came before and what would come after. He said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18–19).

Salvation, both personal and corporate, is a part of a grand narrative that is about more than the plan of salvation so often emphasized in today’s culture. McKnight says, “Once again, the ‘good news’ of this gospel is that Israel’s Story has now reached its resolution in Jesus Christ. . . . Because the ‘gospel’ is the Story of Jesus that fulfills, completes, and resolves Israel’s Story, we dare not permit the gospel to collapse into the abstract, the de-storified points in the Plan of Salvation.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Gilbert, *What Is the Gospel?*, 35.

<sup>18</sup> Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 51.

This is not to suggest that the salvation of humanity, both personal and corporate, is not absolutely essential to the story that is preached. Gospel preaching or proclamation of the good news must include the information that makes salvation possible. Preaching, whether to crowds or individuals, must declare salvation is possible because of the cross, but that is not all. McKnight exclaims,

No matter how central the cross is to the Story and to the Plan of Salvation, we need to keep in mind that the story is more than the story of the cross. Jesus didn't just die. The Story of Jesus includes, by implication, the life of Jesus (birth, teachings, actions), but Paul's focus is the last week and beyond . . . the death of Jesus, the burial of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus, and the appearances of Jesus. Furthermore, the Story of Jesus continued beyond the appearances.<sup>19</sup>

This does not diminish the need for stressing conversion in the discipleship process. People must be led to a personal relationship with Jesus, the Christ. A healthy disciple-making process will include an understanding of the gospel the way Jesus preached it. He preached the “gospel of the kingdom” (Matt 9:35). Bill Hull summarizes what he calls “the kingdom gospel”:<sup>20</sup>

It is the proclamation of the rule and reign of Christ over all of life. This good news began with his deliverance of ancient Israel and his promises to save humankind from the kingdom of darkness, despair, sin and death through a Messiah. It is the announcement that the promised Messiah has come as Jesus, who is the long-expected king who will sit on God's throne. Through him we have access to eternal life, and we come under his rule by following him and becoming his disciples. From him we learn how to live our lives to the fullest. The good news is that it doesn't matter if we are Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. Jesus came for us. He lived for us, died for us, was raised from the dead for us, and will return for us and reconcile all things to himself. Those who follow him will live in his presence, under his rule. Those who reject him will eternally exist apart from his loving presence which is called hell—the best God can do for those who don't like him or desire to be with him.<sup>21</sup>

It may seem to be a subtle difference between the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of salvation. But it matters where the emphasis is placed. To properly share the

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<sup>19</sup> McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel*, 53.

<sup>20</sup> Bill Hull, *Conversion and Discipleship: You Can't Have One without the Other* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 38.

<sup>21</sup> Hull, *Conversion and Discipleship*, 38–39.

gospel of the kingdom, you must share the gospel of salvation. Historically, many churches have preached the message of salvation without a true acknowledgement that salvation could not be accomplished if the King had not first come. James Wilhoit writes,

The gospel is an invitation to abundant life in the kingdom of God. The gospel is not simply the good news that begins the Christian life, but it should also provide a pattern for our living. We must be gospel-centric people, who recognize that “the Christian life is a process of renewing every dimension of our life—spiritual, psychological, corporate, social—by thinking, hoping, and living out the ‘lines’ or ramifications of the gospel” Our heartbeats and breathing ought to keep to the rhythm of the kingdom.<sup>22</sup>

Preaching the kingdom of God entails, at least in part, the declaration of the wonderful possibilities that exist for those who obediently follow Jesus. It is not wrong to proclaim a robust gospel emphasizing God’s reign over every aspect of humanity and His willingness for His creatures to be abundantly blessed. Talk of the gospel should not be narrowed to something that diminishes the joyful reality that knowing God impacts all of life. Suggestions that speaking of radical displays of God’s loving goodness and amazing power are too prominent seem to miss a major point. God wants people to do well and flourish in the process.

Some are rightfully concerned about the focus of the preaching about Jesus. Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert seem to want to guard against a gospel that is primarily about social and physical betterment. They write,

Their commission, rather was to declare that the kingdom had come, to call the world to enter its blessings, and to declare to them how they could do so. That’s why we see, in the book of Acts, the story of the gospel’s spread from Jerusalem to Judea, its crossing over to Samaria, and then its breaking the final barrier to penetrate the uttermost parts of the earth—rather than the story of Christians working for the social betterment of Jerusalem and Antioch. Those early Christians understood, as should we, that their commission from their King was to spread far and wide the good news of the kingdom and that the way into it was by coming to

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<sup>22</sup> Jim Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 101. Wilhoit quotes Timothy Keller, “The Centrality of the Gospel” (sermon preached at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York City, November 2, 1997), [www.redeemer2.com/resources/papers/centrality.pdf](http://www.redeemer2.com/resources/papers/centrality.pdf).



the King in repentance and faith. That was the only thing that would usher people into the kingdom and into a life of service to the king.<sup>23</sup>

But in guarding against error, it is possible to inadvertently miss how God chooses to work in the earth. DeYoung and Gilbert say,

You see, the disciples were not simply to sit and enjoy the fact that all authority now belonged to King Jesus; they were to go and proclaim that fact to a dark world that had no idea of that reality. They were to “witness”—not build, not establish, not usher in, not even build for the kingdom—but bear witness to it. They were to be subjects and heralds, not agents, of the kingdom.<sup>24</sup>

The activity of men and women who have been changed is a witness to the greatness and wonder of Jesus Christ. Humans doing well despite the circumstances that surround them is an important testimony that the Bible is true and makes an eternal difference. The fear of people going too far in their claims of what is the gospel that we should preach has led some not to go far enough. Pennington reminds us,

The loss of focus on human flourishing—indeed, the latent fear of speaking this way that plagues many faithful Christians, including many within the assorted Reformed, Lutheran, and evangelical traditions—often comes from a rightful and biblical desire to highlight a “God-centeredness” that keeps God and his creatures in a proper relationship of hierarchy and in proper focus; too much talk of the importance of humanity sounds to many like a slippery slope to the loss of the Bible’s focus on God.<sup>25</sup>

But in the disciple-making process illustrated in Matthew 9:35–38, we see the importance of teaching, preaching, and healing.

## Healing

Jesus healed during the period of time that he developed his earliest disciples. Among other things, Jesus’s healings authenticated His messianic authority. For instance, in John 2:11 and John 2:23, disciples “believed on him” or “believed in his name” after

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<sup>23</sup> Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 112–13.

<sup>24</sup> DeYoung and Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?*, 139.

<sup>25</sup> Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing*, 291–92.

seeing Jesus perform miraculous acts. In Matthew 8–9, Jesus consistently demonstrates powerful supernatural acts that Matthew uses to show messianic authority.

The leper's healing is a testimony to be verified by the priests (Matt 8:1–4). The healing of the centurion's servant illustrates who are the true children of Abraham (Matt 8:8–13). The healing of Peter's mother-in-law is presented as a fulfillment of prophecy (Matt 8:14–17). As Jesus is confronted by devils in Matthew 8:29, they testify that Jesus is the "Son of God." When Jesus heals a crippled man, He demonstrates He has been given power by God (Matt 9:1–8). But these displays of supernatural activity are not done just to prove a point.

Bill Hull reminds us that Jesus was not just doing things in order to extend His influence and substantiate His claims to authority:

True authority never needs to toot its own horn. The spiritually minded recognize this. This man's works substantiated his words. Implanted in his disciples minds was the authenticity and value of God's Word. Only when a man sees proof that God's written word works will he dedicate himself to the study and application of it. Jesus spoke from familiar Scriptures in the synagogue, and yet the people were amazed as if they were hearing them for the first time. As they saw him cast the unclean spirits from the madman, their astonishment was advanced to maximum dimensions. The hearing and the testing of God's Word proved its value and power beyond their wildest expectations.<sup>26</sup>

Jesus readily showed that the things He did were consistent with what the Word of God said about the Messiah. He was a walking, talking demonstration that the promises of God were and are being fulfilled. In other words, the miracles themselves were not the proof that Jesus was who He claimed; rather, it was His obedience to the Word of God. Moisés Silva notes, that Jesus was not just proving He was the Messiah,

Rather, the Servant of the Lord is fulfilling the OT prophecies by his healing miracles (Matt 8:1–617; cf. Isa 53:4). The healings do not prove Jesus to be the Christ but viewed against their OT background they are seen to be Christ's act of obedience and thus a necessary element in his messianic work. This conviction lies

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<sup>26</sup> Bill Hull, *Jesus Christ, Disciplemaker*, 20th anniv. ed (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 91.

behind the many summaries that emphasize Jesus' willingness and ability to heal all who came to him with physical needs.<sup>27</sup>

While going about teaching, preaching, and healing, Jesus acknowledged that there were multitudes of people that needed help. Matthew 9:36 says, "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."

The acts that Jesus chose to do for the people were not just mere demonstrations of power but profound acts of compassion for hurting and leaderless people. Jesus was showing His disciples the need for more disciple-makers.

### **Compassion**

By "healing every sickness and every disease among the people" (Matt 9:35), Jesus shows His willingness to engage people at their point of perceived need in order to reveal the depths of their real need and demonstrate his ability to help. The actions the Master performed were models because, as Dane Ortlund reminds us, the Gospels provide a composite picture of Jesus. Prominent among these reminders is that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament hopes and desires (Matt 5:17). He displays a holiness such that even His friends tremble in fear from being made aware of their sinfulness (Luke 5:8). Jesus is a powerful teacher who has greater authority than the religious leaders and academics of the day (Mark 1:22). Ortlund says, "To diminish any of these is to step outside of vital historic orthodoxy. But the dominant note left ringing in our ears after reading the Gospels, the most vivid and arresting element of the portrait, is the way the Holy Son of God moves toward, touches, heals, embraces, and forgives those who least deserve it yet truly desire it."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *NIDTTE*, 2:447.

<sup>28</sup> Dane C. Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 27.

Jesus shows compassion. It is an aspect of His character that all disciples are called to emulate. The actions that Jesus took seemed to be triggered by the condition of the people He saw in the places He was teaching, preaching, and healing. His heart went out to the multitudes (Matt 9:36). Michael Wilder and Timothy Paul Jones assert,

True compassion for people and love for God compels the pastoral leader to nourish God's flock. This provision encompasses more than proclamation—it includes, for example, the formation of environments where people are safe from hunger and abuse—but nourishment of the flock never includes less than the sustained teaching of God's Word.<sup>29</sup>

Is it needful to make disciples who are interested in the physical well-being of people as well as the spiritual condition? Should we think the in-breaking of the Kingdom of God entails saints expecting and maybe even at times being focused on acts of mercy that do not seem to immediately lead to the salvation of souls? Some seem to believe this is a watering down of the gospel. Gilbert and DeYoung claim,

We don't pretend to have a formula for what keeps disciple making properly in focus. Nor can we give you an ironclad set of priorities, as if supporting a missionary is always a better decision than improving a school. What we can say, though, is that in *general* we think the best way for church leaders to think through these things is to lean toward supporting those things that more directly support the mission of the church that the Lord Jesus has given it, over those things that less directly support it.<sup>30</sup>

Yet, the compassion demonstrated by followers of Christ is often the best method of evangelism. Meeting needs can be an effective way of showing empathy with people. Entering a person's life and meeting a perceived need can be a powerful witness. David Wheeler shares,

Empathetic living is taking what Satan means for destruction and turning it around for the glory of God. Everyone has a testimony of God's grace and love. It may be the loss of a friend, personal illness, loss of a job, or the challenge of a disability. Being the liar that he is, Satan will try to use difficult times to pull you away from

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<sup>29</sup> Michael S. Wilder and Timothy Paul Jones, *The God Who Goes before You: Pastoral Leadership as Christ-Centered Followership* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2018), 169.

<sup>30</sup> DeYoung and Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?*, 236 (emphasis original).

God. In reality, God is sufficient and wants to use your testimony to celebrate His wonders and empathetically to point people to Him!<sup>31</sup>

It is a misleading argument to say an interest in what might be called social issues somehow takes away from or is not part of the church's mission. Yet it is clearly possible to stray away from a healthy focus. Doing good and even being good are not enough. People need to be told about the source of the goodness being displayed. Robby Gallaty says,

It is absolutely crucial we speak the gospel. A family member told me, "I don't need to share the gospel with my coworkers. They know I'm a good person who lives with integrity. They can see that." My response was, "What they need to hear, though, is why you're a 'good person.'" People around you need to understand that Jesus is the difference that made a difference. The fruit that we bear should point people to Christ, but it simply cannot stop there. It is crucial to be ready at all times to provide a defense for the hope that is within us (1 Peter 3:15).<sup>32</sup>

Walking in love and showing love is how a disciple is called to live. Disciples must be encouraged to reflect the heart of God by doing both spontaneous and organized acts of love. Yet it is possible to over-emphasize one aspect of the character of a disciple at the expense of another.

Disciples are to share the Word of God so that people hear about the truth of the saving grace of God. Disciples are to perform acts of kindness and mercy to reflect the compassionate heart of God. Some perceive there is a tension between meeting temporal human needs and/or leading people to embrace a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. That tension is dissolved when we realize it is our perceptions, not God's reality, that pit those concepts against each other. When considering this issue, it is important to recognize that as disciples we are to offer both grace and truth, not grace or truth. Ray Ortlund points out the need for disciples to lean on God to know what is most needful at any given moment:

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<sup>31</sup> Dave Earley and David A. Wheeler, *Evangelism Is: How to Share Jesus with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010), 240.

<sup>32</sup> Robby Gallaty and Chris Swain, *Replicate: How to Create a Culture of Disciple-Making Right Where You Are* (Chicago: Moody, 2020), 239.

Left to ourselves, we will get it partly wrong, but we won't feel wrong, because we'll be partly right. But only partly. Truth without grace is harsh and ugly. Grace without truth is sentimental and cowardly. The living Christ is full of grace and truth (John 1:14). We cannot represent him, therefore, within the limits of our own personalities and backgrounds. Yet as we depend on him moment by moment, both personally and corporately, he will give us wisdom. He will stretch us and make our churches more like himself, so that we can glorify him more clearly than we ever have before.<sup>33</sup>

Glorifying God should be a motivating factor in all that disciple makers do.

Certainly, glorifying God includes evangelism. David Wheeler and Vernon Whaley make bold claims about the place of evangelism within the life of a Christ-follower:

At its core, evangelism is the “good news” of Christ and therefore must be embraced as a lifestyle by every Christ-follower. . . . In short evangelism is the essence of who you are as you walk in daily life. . . . Evangelism must be the purpose and driving force of all missions. It is impossible to do authentic missions without intentionally doing evangelism.<sup>34</sup>

But doing evangelism is not forgetting about acts of sacrificial love. The performance of kindness and mercy can be powerful indicators that Jesus is worthy of being worshipped. Ray Ortlund believes there is a need for churches to develop fresh credibility as places and people of love: “In fact, few things are more urgent for us than to regain credibility as people who know how to love, for Jesus’s sake, so that his glorious gospel is unmistakably clear in our churches.”<sup>35</sup>

To navigate when and how disciples are made and engaged, shepherds are needed. Jesus noticed the people were like “sheep having no shepherd” (Matt 9:36). Having compassion meant seeing the condition of the multitudes of people around and properly diagnosing the culture’s helpless and harried condition. Their state was caused by a lack of responsible leaders and a lack of godly leadership. According to Wilder and Jones, leadership is needed even though all disciples are part of a holy priesthood because

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<sup>33</sup> Ray Ortlund, *The Gospel: How the Church Portrays the Beauty of Christ*, 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 22–23.

<sup>34</sup> David Wheeler and Vernon M. Whaley, *The Great Commission to Worship: Biblical Principles for Worship-Based Evangelism* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2011), 14–15.

<sup>35</sup> Ortlund, *The Gospel*, 23.

leaders help people see themselves aright: “What the church needs are leaders who equip their people to see themselves, with their leaders, as ‘a holy priesthood’—a divinely devoted, covenant-constituted community that shares sacrificially with one another and models God’s ways in the world (1 Pet 2:5–12).”<sup>36</sup>

There are a number of fine academics, including Andreas Köstenberger, who believe Jesus’s behavior in the Gospels cannot be taken as normative. Köstenberger maintains,

First, the shepherding motif in the Gospels is primarily Christocentric—demonstrating how Jesus is God’s promised eschatological shepherd of his people. As mentioned, this Christological shepherding activity is explicitly extended to Peter (and, by extension, to other apostles and church leaders) in John 21:15–17. Second, during Jesus’ ministry he involved his disciples in his shepherding activity—providing for the physical and spiritual needs of the flock (Matt 10:5–6; Mark 6:34. Third, Jesus’ teaching and shepherding set the example for the sheep, feeding and sacrificing for the sheep, and seeking the sheep who are lost.<sup>37</sup>

But Köstenberger seems concerned that some might see the Gospels as good ground for the basis of training modern disciples. He disagrees with writers including Robert Coleman, who (speaking of Jesus) says,

He did not ask anyone to do or be anything which first he had not demonstrated in his own life, thereby not only proving its workability but also its relevance to his mission in life. And this he was able to do because he was constantly with his disciples. His training classes were never dismissed. Everything he said was a personal lesson in reality, and since the disciples were there to notice it, they were learning practically every moment of their waking day.<sup>38</sup>

Köstenberger issues a warning to those who make disciples today: “A major caution must be registered before attempting to apply principles from Gospel narratives to the present life of the church. . . . The Gospels cannot be removed from their place in

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<sup>36</sup> Wilder and Jones, *The God Who Goes before You*, 105.

<sup>37</sup> Andreas Köstenberger, “Shepherds and Shepherding in the Gospels,” in *Shepherding God’s Flock: Biblical Leadership in the New Testament and Beyond*, Benjamin L. Merkle and Thomas R. Schreiner (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2015), 51–52.

<sup>38</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 2006), 68.

salvation history and be made wholesale into a normative leadership training manual for the modern church.”<sup>39</sup>

Yet, as Coleman pointed out, training of disciples demands transparency and availability by the one helping a disciple develop: “There can be no shirking or evading of our personal responsibility to show the way to those we are training, and this revelation must include the practical outworking in life of the deeper realities of the Spirit. This is the Master’s method, and nothing else will ever suffice to train others to do his work.”<sup>40</sup>

It is important to understand that the Gospel of Matthew and the other Gospels give us timeless models of principles that can govern a disciple making process. As Köstenberger relates, disciple makers should follow Jesus’s example:

Jesus set a clear example for his undershepherds to follow in at least three areas: (1) compassion for the sheep (Matt. 9:36; Mark 6:34); (2) feeding and sacrificing for the sheep (John 10:11, 15, 17–18); and (3) seeking the sheep that are lost (Matt. 18:10–14; Luke 15:4–7). Both texts that describe Jesus seeing the crowds of people as sheep without a shepherd emphasize the compassion that he felt for them (Matt. 9:39; Mark 6:34). Jesus’ compassion for the crowds and those in need made such an impression on his disciples that it is recorded multiple times across the synoptic Gospels. . . . Jesus deeply cared for others, and each text that highlights his compassion also describes how he took concrete action to meet people’s spiritual and physical needs.<sup>41</sup>

As Jesus was going about teaching, preaching, and healing, He sees the people and has compassion on them. This compassion leads Him to share with His disciples that there is a harvest in need of workers.

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<sup>39</sup> Köstenberger, *Shepherding God’s Flock*, 52.

<sup>40</sup> Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 68.

<sup>41</sup> Köstenberger, *Shepherding God’s Flock*, 55.



## Harvest

“Then saith he unto his disciples, the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Matt 9:37–38).

It is useful to repeat part of a quote shared earlier from William Davies and Dale Allison that helps us understand how Jesus uses the word harvest here in Matthew: “Here, however, the harvest is a metaphor for mission, and the disciples of Jesus, with their preaching of the kingdom, are the harvesters. So, the eschatological harvest has been moved from the future to the present (cf. Dodd, *Parables*, pp. 143–4).”<sup>42</sup> Care for the multitudes is now the mission, with a view of how disciples should think and behave now to prepare for the future. In what ways should Christ-followers address the harvest?

Those working in the harvest must use the appropriate tools. It would be easy to think that kind and loving actions would be adequate tools to make disciples. A disciple-making process that leans too heavily on doing good without doing healthy evangelism can be ineffective at best and harmful at worst because it gives a false sense of security to those who are perishing and those who care about them. How, and if, the gospel is shared is of utmost importance. Tim Keller says,

We must not then give the impression that the gospel is simply a divine rehabilitation program for the world, but rather that it is an accomplished substitutionary work. We must not depict the gospel as primarily joining something (Christ’s kingdom program) but rather as receiving something (Christ’s finished work). If we make this error, the gospel becomes another kind of salvation by works instead of a salvation by faith.<sup>43</sup>

There is a danger that a faulty understanding of the gospel can be promoted, thereby handicapping the efforts to make healthy disciples. Bill Hull and Ben Sobels believe, “Correctly understood, the gospel is a Scripture-based declaration about Jesus—who Jesus is, what he has done, how he fulfills all Scripture, and how he calls us to

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<sup>42</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 146.

<sup>43</sup> Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 30–31.

respond to him.”<sup>44</sup> There are a multitude of venues for speaking the gospel. Those opportunities and methods should lead to a harvest of godly disciples. Disciple-makers must be deployed in effective ways to reap a healthy harvest.

The church is God’s chosen vehicle for providing workers for his harvest, yet some believe the church has outsourced some of its most important tasks. Neil Cole criticizes modern churches in the West for giving up on some of its duties:

The essence of the church is lost when she farms out her responsibilities to other organizations. The world today looks at the church wondering what relevance she has. The only use they see for the church is performing the sacerdotal duties of preaching, marrying, burying, baptizing and passing around wafers and grape juice. How sad! The church was once a catalyst for artistic expression, social change, and the founding of hospitals, schools, and missionary enterprise, but today she has settled for providing a one-hour-a-week worship concert, an offering plate, and a sermon.<sup>45</sup>

In spite of flirting with and sometimes even wallowing in irrelevance, the church is still God’s household, the body of Christ, the temple of the Spirit, the pillar and foundation of truth, the bride of Christ, Christ’s flock, and so much more.<sup>46</sup> Collin Hansen and Jonathan Leeman offer a definition of a church:

A church is a group of Christians who assemble as an earthly embassy of Christ’s heavenly kingdom to proclaim the good news and commands of Christ the King; to affirm one another as his citizens through the ordinances; and to display God’s own holiness and love through a unified and diverse people in all the world, following the teaching and example of elders.<sup>47</sup>

Even after there is some semblance of agreement on the job of the church, there is still much debate about the best way of doing church. How does the church develop and deploy people to be disciples that make disciples? Will Mancini looked at

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<sup>44</sup> Bill Hull and Ben Sobels, *The Discipleship Gospel: What Jesus Preached—We Must Follow* (Brentwood, TN: HIM, 2018), chap. 3, “The Essential Elements of Jesus’ Gospel,” sec., “The Word ‘Gospel’ Itself,” para. 2.

<sup>45</sup> Neil Cole, *Organic Leadership: Leading Naturally Right Where You Are* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 116.

<sup>46</sup> Collin Hansen and Jonathan Leeman, *Rediscover Church: Why the Body of Christ Is Essential*, 9Marks and The Gospel Coalition (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 25.

<sup>47</sup> Hansen and Leeman, *Rediscover Church*, 30.

three eras of church history. He named them Wartime Revival (1940–1960), the Golden Era of Denominationalism (1960–1980), and New Permission Era (1980–2000).<sup>48</sup> Out of these three eras, Mancini lists assumptions that have taken hold.

Church growth is secured by individual commitments made in a decision at a public event.

Church growth results in the church being a visible and prominent community institution.

Church growth comes from providing programs that young families want to access.

Church growth requires a culturally relevant and inspiring public experience with outstanding customer service and hospitality for the audience.

Church growth is measured by the numbers of people attending and serving in worship services and other programs arranged as steps in a linear process.

Above all, church growth has to do with what organizations do, not what individuals do, except insofar as individuals support the work of the organization.<sup>49</sup>

Since the year 2000, however, Mancini believes things have changed. He calls the time from 2000 to 2020 the missional reorientation. He writes, “Both new permission ministry leaders and missional thinkers believed that God ordained the local church to reach the world with the gospel. Evangelism and missions could not be delegated to a parachurch organization, a traveling show, or secular structures that encouraged faith. They were the church’s job.”<sup>50</sup>

Mancini goes on to assert that there is a reorientation, a change, about how some are thinking of church:

Missional thinkers, by contrast, pushed the conversation to recalibrate the very identity of God’s people. The point wasn’t to have a church with a missions department but to have a missional church. The focus on the church’s identity flows out of an understanding of God’s identity as a God on mission. The Great Commission of this era is John 20:21: “as the Father has sent me, I am sending

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<sup>48</sup> Will Mancini and Cory Hartman, *Future Church: Seven Laws of Real Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2020), 71.

<sup>49</sup> Mancini and Hartman, *Future Church*, 72.

<sup>50</sup> Mancini and Hartman, *Future Church*, 90.

you.” The goal is to see each person as an everyday missionary, living sent where they live, work and play.<sup>51</sup>

Mancini later explains his seven laws for real church growth. In summary, they are the laws of mission, power, love, context, development, leadership, and vision.<sup>52</sup> This is what he expects will be the kind of church that makes impact for the next twenty years. He calls it Future Church. He says the church will be a training center where disciple-making is expected of everyone. It will be a place where someone is assisted to live out their calling. Disciples will reproduce themselves and be a part of relationships in groups as small as one other person for effective disciple-making.

Effective disciple-making process will demand effective leaders. Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck state, “The church must hear that she is on the planet to make disciples, that the mission is urgent, and that God has called His people as missionaries into all spheres of life.”<sup>53</sup> These missionaries must be tethered to the Word of God. They must be encouraged to have the conviction that “God’s Word is, for the Church, the only definitive voice concerning His world. The Church of God will continue to be faithful to her mission to multiply disciples and leaders as long as she trusts in God’s Word.”<sup>54</sup>

Trusting in the Word of God leads to obedient disciple-making. No Christian is given the luxury of skipping the command to make disciples. According to Bobby Harrington, “In Scripture, the concept of being a disciple is not an add-on to conversion; it is a part of conversion.”<sup>55</sup> The secret to powerful disciple-making movements is not in learning to gather massive crowds, but in intimate relationships.

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<sup>51</sup> Mancini and Hartman, *Future Church*, 90.

<sup>52</sup> Mancini and Hartman, *Future Church*, 94.

<sup>53</sup> Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development* (Nashville: B & H, 2016), 143.

<sup>54</sup> Geiger and Peck, *Designed to Lead*, 105.

<sup>55</sup> Bobby Harrington and W. Scott Sager, *Disciple Making; The Core Mission of the Church*, Real Life Theology (self-pub., Renew.org, 2021), 47.

It seems anti-intuitive to acknowledge the large harvest before us by concentrating on small segments instead of larger and larger groups. Jesus made a point of investing in small groups. First there was the inner circle of Peter, James, and John; then, there were the twelve and the seventy-two. As the numbers grew, Jesus did not spend more time with the masses but more time with His intimate disciples. Neil Cole says, “If Jesus is looking in us for faithfulness, fruitfulness, and finishing well, then perhaps our priorities should reflect these goals. Usually, Christian leaders put more emphasis on tasks at the expense of relationships, but actually it is our relationships that will ultimately reveal our success or failure.”<sup>56</sup>

These relationships should not be maintained haphazardly or by accident. A process needs to be developed that is both biblical and reproducible. Stephen Owens reminds us, “The main thing is not what process and curriculum you are using to help develop your leaders, but rather, do you have a process that you’re using to develop your leaders? You can always tweak the process later, but first you must have a process to tweak.”<sup>57</sup>

Developing healthy, godly, reproducing disciples is an ongoing work because the multitudes are always out there. In His compassion, Jesus opens our eyes to the reality that there is a great harvest to be worked. Jesus alerts us that more disciples are needed. Jim Putnam explains,

A disciple is a person who follows Jesus, is transformed by Jesus, and joins Jesus on his mission; that’s the job of every believer. A disciple maker makes disciples. Every Christian has that job. A pastor is more than that. He has been given the task of leading a church in which he is to create a system in which people are taught how to be disciples. In other words, he and his team are called to lead in the development of a church-wide system that will make disciples who make disciples.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Cole, *Organic Leadership*, 160–61.

<sup>57</sup> Stephen D. Owens, *The Next Leader: Developing Disciples to Become Leaders within the Church* (self-pub., Alpha Lending & Investments, 2021), 127.

<sup>58</sup> Jim Putman, Bobby Harrington, and Robert E. Coleman, *DiscipleShift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 120.

Creating an effective team to address the harvest will take prayer.

## **Pray**

When Jesus saw the multitudes and pointed out they were like those who had no shepherd, no leader, and no access to what they really needed, He tells His disciples to pray. The One who has taught with authority, preached with authority, and healed with authority now instructs His disciples to pray. Jesus tells them to pray to the Lord of the harvest. Then, in Matthew 10, He empowers and sends the disciples. Jesus once again shows He is the Lord over all. He is the promised Messiah. The very act of praying shows the disciples were fully convinced that the Lord of the harvest could answer their request. The sending out showed that Jesus was that Lord.

Making healthy disciples cannot be done apart from the leading and empowering of the Lord. Building a disciple-making process that honors God cannot be done without Him initiating and sustaining it. Coleman claims,

Too quickly is this issue passed over in church growth discussions, even within the evangelical community. Much of what is said on this subject comes largely from sociological and behavioristic research, not the content of the Christian mission. The result is that interest turns primarily to humanistic considerations, like more astute communication techniques or better institutional programs.<sup>59</sup>

Coleman does not think these programs are universally bad and unproductive, but they must not leave out the Lord of the harvest: “All this is helpful, of course, but unless there is genuine commitment to the essential Gospel of Christ, merely changing ways of doing things is like rearranging chairs on the Titanic. We must come to grips with the faith once delivered to the saints and then let it set our agenda.”<sup>60</sup>

We are to pray, making ourselves available to be of use to the Lord of the harvest. Dann Spader says,

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<sup>59</sup> Coleman, *Master Plan of Discipleship*, 125.

<sup>60</sup> Coleman, *Master Plan of Discipleship*, 125.

All around us, people are searching for this good news. God's Spirit is drawing people to Himself. The Holy Spirit is doing His job. God's Word is true, "the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few" (Matt 9:37). We must do our job too, and with boldness and clarity, like Jesus and John the Baptist, must proclaim clearly that "the kingdom is near" and that repentance is the key that unlocks the door to a relationship with Christ. If we don't tell our friends, who will?<sup>61</sup>

Prayer is desperately needed as leaders try to figure out how to help people properly engage in ministry. DeYoung and Gilbert encourage leaders not to overwhelm the church with every good idea that comes along: "Help people be faithful disciples and entrepreneurs and hard workers in their jobs, in their families, and in their communities. Your job is to equip them for ministry, but don't make a church program for every good deed Christians might do in Christ's name."<sup>62</sup>

It is important that the disciple-making process be creative and matched by the Holy Spirit to the people being discipled. Ministries should be made for the people, not people for the ministries. According to J. T. English, people should be able to be disciples where God sovereignly places them. This is why we pray to the Lord of the harvest that He would send laborers into His harvest. He owns it all. He knows the conditions in which people find themselves and what should be their course of action. The job a person has may be the perfect place to engage the world and make disciples. English reiterates,

Yet, in the church today, many Christians still believe that vocational ministry is more meaningful than working in the marketplace, education, or medical fields. One of the most important things you can do for your people is remind them of the importance of their work, to reinfuse gospel meaning into their everyday lives. Churches that are committed to deep discipleship want their best disciple-makers to be commissioned into their vocations as men and women whose work is infused with the purpose of the kingdom of God.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Dann Spader, *4 Chair Discippling: Growing a Movement of Disciple-Makers* (Chicago: Moody, 2014), 60.

<sup>62</sup> DeYoung and Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?*, 258–59.

<sup>63</sup> J. T. English, *Deep Discipleship: How the Church Can Make Whole Disciples of Jesus* (Nashville: B & H, 2020), 179.

Every disciple should be valued and encouraged through a disciple-making process. One process that Jesus used can be succinctly summarized as “Teach, Preach, Heal.”

### **Conclusion**

This chapter made a brief survey of relevant disciple-making literature to confirm that the Gospel of Matthew provides a timeless and reproducible model for making disciples. The model demonstrated by Jesus can be reduced to its essence in the phrase “Teach, Preach, Heal.” Those words are taken from Matthew 9:35.

Matthew 9:35–38, part of a literary *inclusio* that begins at Matthew 4:23, is a section of Matthew showing how Jesus made his earliest disciples. The principles Jesus demonstrated can be applied to modern disciple-making and are in fact an adequate process for First Baptist Church to use today. There are many notable features of Jesus’s behavior that are transferable to current practice.

Jesus seems to teach, preach and heal in every setting. Everywhere he went, he took some appropriate action to train or help his disciples. He went where people were. All Christians are to go, and wherever they find themselves stationed, they should make disciples. There is not just one way to approach disciple-making. That is why “Teach, Preach, Heal” is an appropriate label.

Teaching is a fundamental part of disciple-making. Jesus’s teaching ministry is on display in Matthew 5–7. His preaching ministry is often featured alongside and within His teaching. The Master’s preaching and teaching cannot always be cleanly distinguished from each other. We have labeled preaching as the bold proclamation that Jesus is the Messiah, the only means of salvation.

This chapter examined whether modern disciples should preach a “plan of salvation gospel” or a “gospel of the kingdom” gospel. The weight of evidence falls in favor of preaching the “King and His kingdom” over “man can be saved by knowing the



death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.” Why? Because the arrival of the King includes the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, and informs people why those facts are important and essential. Preaching the gospel of the kingdom aligns with what the Word of God had declared and authenticates the life of Jesus in a more holistic way. The plan of salvation alone seems to lessen the value of the words of Scripture.

Scripture is also highlighted in the healing recorded in chapters 8 and 9. The healings point to the authenticity of Jesus’s messianic claims, but there seems an even greater reason for the healings: to show Jesus’s compassion. Showing compassion demonstrates He is the Great Shepherd who cares for the sheep. His compassion is a model for us.

Jesus shows compassion and makes Himself available to the Spirit of God for the good of others and the making of disciples. We can do the same thing today. We should look out over the masses and see people who are helpless and harassed by the situations in which they find themselves. They are like sheep without a shepherd, and as disciple-makers, we can help them meet the Shepherd and teach them to help others as they have been helped. Compassion includes not only acts of loving service but clear presentations of the gospel. That compassion leads to harvest.

There is a great harvest of souls that has not yet been reaped. Disciples need to go out into the fields and do the needed work. But the Lord of those fields must assign and empower the places and methods. We must pray. We do not just make it up and do just anything. We submit to a loving Lord who has called us to be disciples that make disciples. One way to begin to submit to God is to follow the way He made disciples as illustrated in Matthew 9:35–38: Teach, Preach, Heal.

## CHAPTER 4

### DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

This chapter describes the process of preparing for and implementing the project and provides an account of the three project goals and their results. The purpose of this project was to develop a structured disciple-making process at First Baptist Church of Garrettsville, Ohio. There were three goals: (1) to assess the current disciple-making practices among members and regular attendees of First Baptist Church of Garrettsville; (2) to develop a 12-segment curriculum that would equip FBCG members and regular attendees to implement the “Teach, Preach, Heal” process in their daily lives; and (3) to develop a ministry plan to facilitate disciple-making efforts for FBCG members.

#### **Project Implementation**

Attempting to fulfill the project goals began in March 2023 with the distribution and collection of the first batch of the Disciple Making Practices Surveys. The work continued until June 2023, when the ministry plan was approved by an expert panel.

#### **Informing and Inviting FBCG**

During their regular meeting time, the members and regular attendees of the Sunday morning worship, the Wednesday night men’s Bible study, and the Sunday morning women’s discipleship class were informed of the coming survey. I recruited men who had demonstrated interest in growing in their faith in the past to be involved in the training. Initially, I met with the men in various settings and numbers: one-on-one, one-on-two, one-on-five, and long distance over the phone and internet. One individual and

one member of the group of five did not complete the discipleship experience before the project was evaluated. The Women's Ministry leader recruited her Sunday morning discipleship class to go through the discipleship material. Despite a strong effort to recruit men and women to participate in the project, I was unable to meet my goal of obtaining thirty-five completed pre-training surveys.<sup>1</sup>

### **Survey Development**

The first goal was to assess the current disciple-making practices among members and regular attendees of First Baptist Church of Garrettsville. This involved creating a Disciple Making Practices Survey (DMPS).<sup>2</sup> This instrument was developed during the completion of the second and third chapters of this project. I drew on the scriptural convictions solidified in chapter 2 and the literature consensus gleaned from chapter 3 to create twenty-five relevant questions for the DMPS.

The DMPS attempted to assess the frequency, quality, and quantity of the disciple-making habits of the members and attendees of First Baptist Church of Garrettsville. The questions were framed to ask about the participant's activity or attitude on a range of behaviors and concepts related to interacting with people in order to make disciples. Respondents were asked to answer each of the twenty-five questions with one of six responses: SD (strongly disagree), D (disagree), DS (disagree somewhat), AS (agree somewhat), A (agree), and SA (strongly agree).

### **Survey Distribution and Completion**

I distributed the DMPS over several weeks during Sunday morning worship and the women's discipleship class. Surveys were also offered at the beginning of the

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<sup>1</sup> Fifty people regularly attend Sunday morning worship. Ten of these are children who were not eligible to take the survey. Ninety percent of the remaining 40 people would be 35. Five of the pre-training surveys had no mate with the post-training surveys. Six post-training surveys had no mate with the pre-class survey. Four surveys were illegible or improperly marked or subjects refused to participate.

<sup>2</sup> See appendix 3.

first class for each of the various men's groups. The surveys were distributed and collected by a volunteer, the pastor, or the Women's Ministry leader. Each survey was given an identifier so that only the volunteer who collected them knew the identities of the respondents. Although well over thirty surveys were initially completed, many of these surveys could not be included in the totals. Several surveys were improperly or incompletely filled out and therefore disqualified. A total of thirty pre-training surveys were properly completed, but nine of these surveys had no corresponding post-training survey and could not be used for data comparison. At the project's conclusion, twenty-one participants had completed corresponding pre- and post-training surveys. The volunteer who collected the surveys recorded that six of these survey sets were completed by men in the discipleship classes, and five surveys were completed by women in the discipleship classes. These data sub-sets allowed for examination of the curriculum to determine if the training had any discernable impact on those who took discipleship classes as opposed to those who were just a part of Sunday morning worship.

### **Goal 1: Assess Current Disciple-Making Practices**

The first goal was to assess the current disciple-making practices among members and regular attendees of First Baptist Church of Garrettsville. The frequency, quality, and quantity of the disciple-making habits were gauged by administering the DMPS. Participants completed the pre-training survey and an identical post-training survey. Twenty-one surveys were collected: five came from the women's discipleship class, six came from the men's discipleship classes, and ten came from the Sunday morning congregation who were not a part of any of the classes.

The DMPS pre-training survey revealed that FBCG members and regular attendees had a median score of 3 when asked if they were discipling someone. The median score was 5 when asked if they were being disciplined by someone.

Table 1. Discipling activity

Survey Question	Pre-training Median (N=21)	Pre-training Mean (N=21)	Std Dev (N=21)
Q15. I am actively being disciplined by someone.	5	4.38/6	1.60
Q16. I am actively discipling someone.	3	3.38/6	1.40

Both scores included in table 1 above indicate a considerable need for a larger percentage of the respondents to be involved in both discipling others and being disciplined. Scripture commands us to make disciples. There were other survey responses that suggested FBCG may not have been as prepared to do some basic things to make disciples. For example, the standard deviation on questions 15 (1.60) and 16 (1.40) reflect the answers of some participants who are relatively new Christians. These outliers helped us determine some of the things we needed to say but would have left out if everybody already thought the same way. It revealed the importance of these two questions in particular, as we long for the day when everyone feels they are being helped to be a stronger Christian.

Questions 2 and 11 addressed whether people were sharing their faith. The responses in table 2 indicated that many of the members and regular attendees were not active in clearly sharing their faith. In table 3, questions 18 and 19 show many were not willing to be a part of a team put together specifically for the purpose of evangelism.

Table 2. FBCG sharing faith

Survey Question	Pre-training Mean (N=21)
Q2. I share the gospel of the Kingdom with others at least once a month.	4.33/6
Q11. I share my faith publicly at least once a week.	3.86/6

Table 3. Willingness to be on evangelism team

Survey Question	Pre-training Mean (N=21)
Q18. I am willing to be a part of an evangelism team.	3.86/6
Q19. I am willing to lead an evangelism team.	3.19/6

The pre-training survey was helpful in creating material that would lead to the fulfillment of goal 2.

### **Goal 2: Develop Curriculum**

The second goal was to develop a 12-segment curriculum that would equip FBCG members and regular attendees to implement the “Teach, Preach, Heal” process in their daily lives.<sup>1</sup> An expert panel used a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum.<sup>2</sup> One of the three reviewers asked for some methodology to be added to the curriculum to see if learners would be able to show they were understanding. I agreed to do several “learning lab” teachings that asked students to participate in sharing what they were learning with others. The classes were very interactive, and I did provide teaching notes to the students and encouraged them to augment those notes each session. The goal was successfully met when 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level according to the expert panel.

The curriculum consisted of twelve segments. Each segment could be adequately covered in an hour, but many of the subjects lent themselves to extended

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 5 for the “Teach, Preach, Heal” disciple-making process course teaching outline, and appendix 6 for the accompanying teacher’s notes.

<sup>2</sup> See appendix 1 for the rubric and the feedback from the expert panel.

discussions in which the students joyfully engaged. Segment 1 allowed the teachers to share the objectives of the training. The students were told they were being taught for the purpose of learning and eventually sharing with others how to make disciples. The members of the class were surprisingly enthusiastic about the process that was outlined and committed to being faithful for the entire twelve sessions. The men were especially accommodating of each other's work and family schedules, and we adjusted the day and time in several instances. That allowed most of those that started the class to attend all the sessions.

Segment 1 also dealt with trying to understand the “Teach, Preach, Heal” concept drawn from the book of Matthew. The teacher did a brief exegesis of the *inclusio* of Mathew 4:23–9:35 with added comments on Matthew 9:36–10:35, making the point that Matthew organized his Gospel to highlight how Jesus trained his earliest disciples.

Segment 2 defined terms like “disciple” and “gospel” and noted that there are a number of false gospels that may sound good but are not true to Scripture. In some of the classes, there was a discussion of a chart describing what false gospels might look like alongside a Kingdom Gospel.<sup>3</sup> Participants seemed surprised that so much of the preaching and teaching that they had seen in various mediums was not healthy, yet well accepted in their communities.

Segment 3 allowed for a wide-ranging discussion of spiritual salvation. The small class sizes for the discipleship groups allowed for quality discussion with each participant about their spiritual condition. The weekly preaching on Sunday morning from the book of John was thematically a complement to what was occurring in the smaller venues.

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<sup>3</sup> Bill Hull, *Conversion and Discipleship: You Can't Have One without the Other* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 33.

Segment 4 was a discussion about the composition of the Bible. This class allowed the teacher to probe to discover the students' competency in handling the Scriptures. There was discussion about the major categories of literature contained within the Scriptures, including history, poetry, prophecy, epistles, Gospels, and more. The participants demonstrated there was a great diversity of understanding about what was in the Bible and how to interpret it. Study methodology was discussed and became more of an emphasis for succeeding segments.

In response to the lessons that had gone before, the results of the survey questions on prayer (see table 4 below), and comments from the expert panel, segment 5 became a highly interactive learning lab.

Table 4. Prayer

Survey Question	Pre-training Mean (N=21)
Q22. I meet to pray with others outside of church services.	3.81/6
Q23. I am able to teach others how to pray.	4.33/6

A group of participants exegeted Matthew 6:9–13. Then each participant prayed a portion of the Scripture out loud. They did not parrot the words but prayed what the words meant to them considering their current situation. This was a highly rewarding exercise. Each participant was encouraged to choose another Scripture to exegete and pray in front of their classmates during the next session. I received unsolicited notes and comments about how impactful this assignment was for those involved.

Segment 6 returned to the subject of the Word of God. There was discussion about how each of the students were currently incorporating God's Word into their lives. The participants traded devotion methods and tips with each other and demonstrated



some of the ways they interacted with the Bible and applicable devotional material. Students discussed the frequency and quantity of their reading and prayer. They also shared things that did not work and what they did to work around recurring problems of interruptions and frustrations.

Each segment seemed to encourage a deepening intimacy between those who were involved. Segment 7's discussion of being a fruit-bearing disciple allowed those in the class to talk about particular challenges they faced when trying to live a godly life. There was much discussion about what to do concerning broken relationships that might be hindering proper interaction with God. Each session now seemed to morph into a free-wheeling discussion about the particulars of an individual student's life. All of the material had generally been covered, but it now seemed to become personally applicable to most of those in the room for each session. The facilitators noted a need to pay attention to time during the segments to ensure all material was properly addressed.

Segment 8 centered on how to create habits that lead to a more productive spiritual life. There was some discussion about the possible differences between natural and spiritual gifts. Each class member was encouraged to spend some time in quiet and solitude during the week and to consider fasting either food or some other thing.

Segment 9 allowed the participants to detail why they now thought sharing their faith was important. There were discussions about particular methods and styles of sharing. Each student also shared their testimony of conversion with the class. The sharing of testimonies was emotionally loaded and well-received. The class members were very affirming to each other and seemed genuinely touched by each other's stories. There was talk about how to make sure Jesus was at the center of each testimony and how to shape the testimony to encourage others to give their lives to Christ.

Segment 10 was designed to be an encouragement to live out "Teach, Preach, Heal" in everyday life. Students were asked to consider their personal circumstances to unearth opportunities for them to actively make disciples. That we are all called to be

disciple-makers was reiterated: everyone who knows Christ should seek opportunities to teach others how to live the Christian life. We discussed one method of finding people for relationship development that might lead to sharing faith: compassion ministry. The pre-training survey indicated many of the respondents were not regularly serving people in need even though most thought Christians should serve the poor.

Table 5. Compassion

Survey Question	Pre-training Mean (N=21)
Q3. I serve those in need and less fortunate at least once a month.	4.29/6
Q17. I volunteer within my community.	3.48/6
Q20. I am willing to be a regular part of an outreach to serve those in need.	4.57/6
Q5. I think Christians should serve the poor.	5.62/6

The class leaders attempted to show that compassion ministries are both an imitation of the life of Jesus and a powerful apologetic that commends the Christian faith to others. There was much discussion about seemingly non-traditional ways to engage people at work and play.

Session 11 addressed the need to walk in the Spirit. The most important thing that can be done is to obey God by living a holy life. There was much discussion about how to hold each other accountable and what could be done beyond the completion of these twelve sessions. The responses were thoughtful and universally positive. Some were starting their own groups, some wanted to continue with the present group, and others wanted to take some time to consider how they might be more effective in the places they already frequent.

Segment 12 included a review and challenge. The disciples were encouraged to be disciple-makers who walked in the Spirit. There was an emphasis on continuing to train their minds for obedience and be responsive to God. The class acted as a commissioning of sorts that thrust the participants out into the world to practice all the things they had learned over the last three months.

### **Goal 3: Create Ministry Plan**

The third goal was to create a ministry plan to facilitate disciple-making efforts for FBCG members.<sup>4</sup> This was measured by an expert panel using a rubric to evaluate the functionality of the plan, communication processes, training elements, provision of discipleship resources, and the action steps.<sup>5</sup> The goal was considered successfully completed when a minimum of 90 percent of all the rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficiency level.<sup>6</sup>

The ministry plan was developed after considering what was discovered and/or affirmed in chapters 2 and 3 of this project and from the pre- and post-training surveys of the disciple-making practices of the members and regular attendees of First Baptist Church of Garrettsville. The ministry plan is meant to cover a three-year period. The first year of the plan incorporates some of the work that was used to develop the concept.

### **The Plan, Year 1: Launch Ministry Plan**

The first year of the ministry plan focuses on the following elements: pointed teaching, small group discipleship training for potential leaders, periodic leadership training, ministry celebration, and coaching.

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<sup>4</sup> See appendix 7.

<sup>5</sup> This panel was comprised of three members: an author of five books concerning making disciples and/or church administration; a pastor who has been at his church more than twenty-five years; and a pastor who earned his doctorate from Gateway Seminary.

<sup>6</sup> See appendix 2 for the rubric and results from the expert panel.

### *Pointed Teaching*

The first step is to begin to use both Sunday morning and Wednesday evening as opportunities to plant seeds about what the Bible says concerning making disciples. There should be a special emphasis on Matthew 9:35–38 and Ephesians 4:11–13 and on Matthew 28:18–20 and Acts 1:8. The pastor and other teachers/leaders will be expected to use nearly every teaching occasion to inform and/or remind the church of the scriptural demand to make disciples who can make disciples who also make disciples. We will stress that disciple-making happens inside and outside of the church walls. Some will be involved in work outside of the church while others will be primarily involved in work inside the church. The church may not be responsible for every ministry a church member participates in, but the church will be responsible to each church member and expect each church member to be responsible to and for the church. This will be a part of bringing clarity to both the educational ministry as well as the whole church.

### *Small Group Discipleship Training for Potential Leaders*

The next part of the plan will be to create ways men and women might have special, intense learning experiences where there is opportunity to address specific questions. These discipleship groups of two to five members (in most cases) will be engaged with material developed to give the basics of the Christian walk and assess where various learners are as far as spiritual maturity is concerned. A syllabus and teacher's notes will be provided to discipleship class members who will be expected to eventually replicate what they are taught with others.

### *Periodic Leadership Training*

As leaders are developed, there will be three to four seminars a year provided by the pastor and others that will help equip current and potential leaders with how to help people become disciples that make disciples, how to recruit small group members, and how to increase their skills in biblical exegesis and interpretation. These seminars

will also be used to help people develop and practice spiritual disciplines such as prayer and Bible reading.

### *Celebrate Ministries*

We will find methods to publicly celebrate the ministry activity of FBCG members inside and outside of the walls of FBCG. Much of the disciple-making done by FBCG members will be considered their own personal ministries, but their membership and accountability will be with FBCG.

### *Make Coaching Available*

The pastor is a certified coach in a system called IDEA coaching. The pastor will meet once a month for one hour to coach individual leaders on how to fulfill their spiritual, family, and ministry goals.

### **The Plan, Year 2: Expand and Intensify**

Year 2 will continue and intensify the elements introduced in year 1 by attempting to multiply discipleship groups and stressing the importance of discipleship during every part of life. A magazine will be developed and regularly published to reinforce the concept of “Teach, Preach, Heal.” The periodic leadership training will continue to focus on real-world application of what we are teaching and give opportunities for adjusting curriculum plans. Teachers and ministry leaders will be asked to share some of their best practices so that everyone might continue to grow and so that there will be a sense of camaraderie between all those teachers and/or leaders.

In year 2, those who were coached in year 1 will be encouraged to pursue coach training to be available to coach others in the expanding network.

### **The Plan, Year 3: Multiply**

Year 3 will continue all that has gone before it to promote and refine the concept of “Teach, Preach, Heal” at First Baptist Church of Garrettsville. Leaders will be

taught to pay attention to the progress of those they have begun to disciple and help them through the process of becoming effective disciple-makers. As suggested by Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, churches need to develop a strong culture that promotes and practices solid biblical convictions and workable constructs to build leaders.<sup>7</sup>

### Post-implementation Data Analysis

Administration of the Disciple Making Practices Survey after the project showed that the curriculum made an overall significant difference in the attitudes and actions of members and regular attendees of FBCG.

Table 6. Results of *t*-test for dependent samples (total)

	Pre-training Total	Post-training Total
Mean	108.5238095	114.3333333
Variance	376.7619048	217.4333333
Observations	21	21
Pearson Correlation	0.789317475	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	20	
t Stat	-2.23127597	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.01863456	
t Critical one-tail	1.724718243	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.037269119	
t Critical two-tail	2.085963447	

Table 6 shows a positive significant statistical difference between pre- and post-training survey total scores:  $t(20) = -2.23127597$ ,  $p = 0.01863456$ . The survey scores were better after the classes than before. Some of the notable changes were made

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<sup>7</sup> Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development* (Nashville: B & H, 2016).

in the area of actual practice rather than just attitude adjustment, but some positive attitude adjustment is recorded. Listed in table 7 are some of the notable changes.

Table 7. Notable changes between pre-training and post-training scores

Survey Question	Pre-training Mean (N=20)	Post-training Mean (N=20)	Change
Q2. I share the Gospel of the Kingdom with others at least once a month.	4.33	4.67	+0.34
Q7. I know how to share the Gospel.	4.24	5.19	+0.95
Q8. I believe I have been trained to help another believer grow spiritually.	4.38	5.10	+0.72
Q11. I share my faith publicly at least once a week.	3.86	4.14	+0.28
Q16. I am actively discipling someone.	3.38	4.24	+0.86

There is an overall improvement in FBCG’s members’ and attendees’ self-assessment of some key disciple-making processes. Question 2 and question 11 indicate that the gospel is being shared more frequently than before the beginning of the project. Responders also show more confidence in their ability to share their faith as shown by questions 7 and 8. Question 16 shows an improvement in engaging in personal disciple-making.

A one-way ANOVA test was also performed, revealing there were statistically significant differences between the three different groups: the women’s discipleship group, the men’s discipleship group, and the general congregation that was not a part of the other two groups. This analysis produced a statistically significant variation between groups,  $F(2,18) = 4.391806196$ ,  $p = 0.027966$ . Post hoc Tukey-Kramer tests showed

significant difference between the women ( $\mu = 101.8$ ) and the men ( $\mu = 124.667$ ) and the congregation ( $\mu = 114.4$ ) and the women ( $\mu = 101.8$ ) but no difference between the men ( $\mu = 124.667$ ) and the congregation ( $\mu = 114.4$ ).

After reflecting on these results, it appears the women's discipleship class self-evaluated themselves much lower, especially in the activity measures, than the general congregation or the men's discipleship group. Overall, FBCG made statistically significant progress. This indicates the classes and preaching combined were effective in initiating a disciple-making process at First Baptist Church of Garrettsville.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this project was to develop a disciple-making process at First Baptist Church of Garrettsville, Ohio. Administration of a survey to assess the disciple-making practices among members and regular attendees of FBCG revealed areas of weakness that could be addressed with the "Teach, Preach, and Heal" curriculum. Teaching this curriculum resulted in thoughtful discussion on how to increase devotion to God, share the gospel, make disciples, and grow in service to others. The training led to the development of a ministry plan to implement this curriculum over the next several years. This ministry plan was strongly informed by the results of the pre- and post-training surveys and the 12-segment "Teach, Preach, Heal" curriculum. This project has raised awareness and brought a renewed focus on disciple-making to First Baptist Church of Garrettsville. There is much to be done, but a successful beginning has been made.



## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of this project was to develop a structured disciple-making process at First Baptist Church of Garrettsville, Ohio. This chapter evaluates the purpose, goals, strengths, and weaknesses of this project. I then share recommendations for enhancing the work that has been presented. I also offer theological and personal observations that were generated from my experience with this task.

#### **Evaluation of the Project's Purpose**

Developing a structured disciple-making process for FBCG was a timely and fruitful venture. Every church should know how they are going to obey the command of our Lord and Savior Jesus to make disciples. I had spent twenty years as pastor of the same church and realized FBCG did not have a specific plan to make disciples. Reading books and articles about disciple-making convinced me that I needed to personally hear from God on the matter. Hearing from God meant I needed to dig into the Scriptures and examine prevalent methodologies in a way I had never properly done before. While reading the Gospel of Matthew, it seemed I had an epiphany when I discovered the *inclusio* of Matthew 4:23 to 9:35. It seemed a potent, timeless, and reproducible disciple-making methodology used by Jesus, and it jumped off the pages of Scripture. I mourned the directionless activity of our church and resolved to do all I could to change it.

This change would have serious implications for our church because of my longevity and influence within our congregation. I entered into this project feeling the weight of needing to get it right by being true to God and loving the congregation. Creating a disciple-making process was a solid approach to caring for the church I pastor.

## **Evaluation of the Project's Goals**

It is easy to make assumptions about people and processes and make critical mistakes in ministry. The three goals of this endeavor were designed with the hope FBCG would be treated as a unique entity. The solutions that would be implemented would address FBCG specifically even as they had potential benefit outside our fellowship.

The first goal was to assess the current disciple-making practices among members and regular attendees of First Baptist Church of Garrettsville. To be considered successful, 90 percent of the adult congregation needed to complete a pre- and post-training Disciple Making Practices Survey. I desired 35 completed pre- and post-training surveys, but only 21 were properly done. This goal was not successfully reached; however, the information gleaned from the completed surveys was still valuable for understanding the congregation. Eleven out of 12 members of the discipleship classes completed the pre- and post-training surveys. The data from these groups helped me understand if the curriculum had any impact.

The second goal was to develop a 12-segment curriculum that would equip FBCG members and regular attendees to implement the “Teach, Preach, Heal” process in their daily lives. This goal was measured by an expert panel who used a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum. The goal was successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. The curriculum became a tool to help shape the eventual ministry plan, which will incorporate the curriculum. The curriculum proved to be flexible and useful in helping participants understand and develop a thirst for disciple-making. Even so, several refinements should be made to add more homework assignments.

The third goal was to develop a ministry plan to facilitate disciple-making efforts for FBCG members. This goal was measured by an expert panel who used a rubric

to evaluate the plan's functionality, communication processes, training elements, provision of discipleship resources, and action steps. The goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of all the rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficiency level.

### **Strengths of the Project**

This project's outcome addressed the needs and challenges documented in chapter 1. A structured, biblical, measurable, and reproducible disciple-making process was created for the members and attendees of FBCG. By using Matthew 9:35 as a guiding principle for "Teach, Preach, Heal," the project presented a holistic approach to disciple-making ministry. The section on theological reflections will elaborate further, but using Scripture created clarity for FBCG to pursue teaching, preaching, and healing in a way that is reproducible today.

The ministry plan is reproducible because it encourages obedience to the Great Commission found in Matthew 28 and other Scriptures. Obedience is one of the marks of a healthy disciple, and healthy disciples make more disciples. Encouragement to share in small groups of two to five people, planting seeds through teaching/preaching, and being involved in continuous learning will enable the ministry plan to be passed from one individual or group to another. Passing along a robust faith will be celebrated, and the celebrations themselves will make the process measurable.

It is important that methodology be maintained to understand if people are following through with the information they have acquired. In some ways, the process becomes organic, like the growing of a tree whose fruit you can manage and encourage while not being able or needing to control the growth process. This allows for tracking progress.

The process is measurable because of the constant training and coaching that is offered. Encouragement is given through planned celebration of faithfulness and blessing,

which is documented and encouraged through church publications in print and over the internet. The structured disciple-making process is biblical, reproducible, and measurable.

### **Weaknesses of the Project**

Even though this project desired to take a holistic approach to the creation and nurturing of disciples, there were some glaring issues that will need to be addressed in future versions of the training. Two of those issues concerned women and children. The potential problem for women was revealed in the data collected in the DMPS. The difference was highlighted by doing a *t*-test for dependent samples on the post-training scores related to disciple-making activity.

Table 8. T-test for dependent samples for activity

	Pre-training Activity	Post-training Activity
Mean	49.80952381	54
Variance	161.2619048	100.3
Observations	21	21
Pearson Correlation	0.894799851	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	20	
t Stat	-3.295163777	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.001808147	
t Critical one-tail	1.724718243	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.003616295	
t Critical two-tail	2.085963447	

Table 8 shows the results of the *t*-test for dependent samples in the questions based on activity, which is defined as actively practicing some type of discipling behavior. The test showed a positive, statistically significant difference between pre-

training scores and post-training scores:  $t(20) = -3.295163777$ ,  $p = 0.001808147$ . A one-way ANOVA was also conducted to compare post-training activity between the women's discipleship group, the men's discipleship group, and the congregation that did not participate in either of the other groups.<sup>1</sup> The analysis produced a statistically significant variation between groups:  $F(2, 18) = 4.212499695$ ,  $p = 0.031573$ . A post hoc Tukey-Kramer analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between the women's discipleship group ( $\mu=45$ ) and men's discipleship group ( $\mu=60.16666667$ ) and between the congregation ( $\mu=54.8$ ) and women's group ( $\mu=45$ ).<sup>2</sup> There was no significant difference detected between groups in the pre-training survey. More thought must address why those who have taken the time and energy to take a class seem unable to make progress in their disciple-making activity. Upon reflection, I believe there may be some inherent difficulty in measuring the activity of women who have responsibilities in the home. Thinking of responsibility in the home forces us to consider the children. The training did not directly deal with the care and nurturing of children who must also be disciplined. To leave kids out of a comprehensive disciple-making process is a mistake.

### **Recommendations for Future Training**

This section provides several recommendations for modifying the ministry plan to address the weaknesses of the project and enhance the overall effectiveness of the training. First, FBCG needs to address the needs of the church to ensure the discipling of children. Classes should be held to teach parents how to teach their children. These quarterly meetings will provide teaching material and instruction on how to use that material in the home or other places outside the church walls. During the meetings for the adults, a carnival will be held for the children. The kids will have games and contests that allow them to display some of the knowledge they have acquired concerning the material

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 4.

<sup>2</sup> See appendix 4.

that their parents taught them in the three preceding months. This will be a fun way for parents to learn to disciple their children. Mature Christians who do not currently have children in their home but are adept at children's ministry will run the carnivals while the parents are being briefed on the material for the next three months.

The second idea is to beef up the ministry plan with some additional sections. One area might include helping people experiment with ministry. Anyone who attends FBCG regularly will hear messages that encourage everyone to be involved in some sort of service. Listeners will hear that God has called all His children and gifted them to do particular tasks. Helping people experiment will mean, in part, finding short-term tasks they can accomplish. This will help them discover whether this type of ministry is a proper fit for them. It will help leadership to determine if the person is the right fit for that kind of assignment for the long-term.

There are certainly a number of ideas that can be added to the ministry plan, such as creating healing or helping events for the community. This will allow people to get some short-term or one-off experience ministering within the community. These events can be suggested and directed by current leadership with the thought of giving budding leaders some meaningful responsibility in a short-term project. Holding occasional events will help in recruiting people who have previously sat on the sidelines or been unaware of the opportunities that exist for those who are a part of FBCG. Utilizing events will also be an effective means of creating safe places for people to minister while they are trying to determine how they fit in God's plan as part of FBCG. An event can make attending training more pressing in the minds of some, thereby helping the periodic training events to be more valuable to those taking part.

The ministry plan could also feature a component that specifically talks about the internet or other means of digital communication to make sure the church's message is getting out. This document should also address church structure by potentially creating a new constitution to support the disciple-making focus. It is obvious there are a myriad

of ways to augment the valuable work that has already been done. But it could be enhanced in the future.

This plan deals directly and effectively with many of the challenges facing FBCG in the area of disciple-making. It is possible to add more specific detail about some of the things that need to be done to make this concept a sustainable reality. More can be said about enhancing the church's structure so the discipleship process can flourish over the long haul. Items can be added to each year of the plan to help FBCG members understand the opportunities that exist for making disciples that make disciples.

### **What I Would Do Differently**

The goals for this project were appropriate and helpful in keeping the project on track. Two of three of the goals were successfully achieved. Overall, I gained a significant amount of knowledge in implementing this ministry research project at FBCG. If able to do some things differently, I would make three changes.

First, although the second and third goals met the 90 percent sufficiency threshold, the expert panels would have benefited from more personal direction and more time to complete their work. It also would have been helpful to supply them with a definition of some of the terms and an explanation of where their work fell in the process.

Second, though there are some very good parts of the ministry plan that has been created, the plan does not directly deal with the care and nurturing of children who must also be disciplined. In the section above on recommendations for future training, I make several suggestions for remedying this problem.

Third, in retrospect, the goal of 90 percent of Sunday morning attendees to complete the pre- and post-training surveys was unrealistic. The methodology did not consider that a large percentage of the group were children and that although the raw numbers were the same, many faces were different. A goal of 70 percent would have been realistically attainable. I also would have asked the person who collected the

surveys to take more time to ensure they were properly filled out. This would have entailed an extra step but potentially would have gained more usable data.

### **Theological Reflections**

It amazes me how fully sufficient the Word of God is for understanding how to do ministry in these modern times. When properly considered, the Word has answers and is a reliable guide for every problem and process in life. Meditating on and obeying the principles found in Scripture provides a wealth of direction and comfort for those desiring to serve God.

It is clear that we are to be disciple-makers (Matt 28:18–20). All Christians are created for good works (Eph 2:10). That work includes gifted people helping others to mature in Christ (Eph 4:12–13). Scripture provides ways for us to obey our Savior and make disciples. One of the ways of making disciples is laid out before us by the author of the first Gospel. From Matthew 4:23 to 9:35, Matthew demonstrates that Jesus made disciples by teaching, preaching, and healing. Jesus felt compassion and then called on those disciples to go and do what they had seen Him do (Matt 9:36–10:5). He is still calling. The question is not so much what God wants, but will we obey what He wants?

In our making of disciples, it is important what we choose to share. Some people preach what might be called a “plan of salvation gospel” as opposed to “the gospel of the kingdom gospel.” The Word of God seems tilted in favor of preaching the King and his kingdom over the claim man can be saved by acknowledging the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. This is because the arrival of the King includes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and helps people understand why those facts are important and essential. Preaching the gospel of the kingdom is consistent with what the Word of God has declared and authenticates the life of Jesus in a more holistic way. The plan of salvation without stressing the life of the King seems to lessen the value of the words of Scripture.



Another important observation is in the area of healing. This project uses the word healing as an integral part of the disciple-making method of Jesus employed in the section of Scripture between Matthew 4:23 and 10:5. Matthew 8 and 9 use healings to point to the authenticity of Jesus's Messianic claims, but there seems to be another good reason for the healings: they show the compassion of Jesus. Showing compassion demonstrates that He is the Great Shepherd who cares for the sheep. His compassion is a model for the church.

Jesus has compassion for people and makes Himself available to the Spirit of God for the good of others and the making of disciples. We can do the same thing today. We can observe the masses and see people who are helpless and harassed by the situation in which they find themselves. They are like sheep without a shepherd, and as disciple-makers, we can help them know the Shepherd and teach them to help others in the same way they have been helped. Compassion calls for acts of loving service and clear presentations of the gospel. Those types of presentations lead to a harvest for the King and His Kingdom.

### **Personal Reflections**

This has been the most humbling endeavor of my life. Certainly, there are things that I have done or tried to do that caused some temporary embarrassment or discomfort. I discovered there are other areas in which I was not prepared and/or equipped. Yet in many ways, this tops them all. To be writing the final words of the last chapter of this project is evidence that a gracious and ever-good God is still on the throne and firmly in charge.

I started this project with confidence that may have bordered on hubris. I had seen what the Word of God said and thought all I would need to do was document my walking out that Word. Yet every step served to remind me that I had fallen short so often and for so long. It hurt that I had not done this sooner, even as I wondered if I would be

able to finish it at all. Pandemic, pride, passion, and people all chipped away at my ill-advised confidence. Yet I gained so much.

This has been a wonderful experience. I have bathed in the streams of Scripture and been washed clean as I admitted my sin and inadequacies. God has graciously confirmed that He truly does want FBCG to be a disciple-making church. He has helped me to rededicate myself to doing His will as a pastor, husband, and disciple-maker. With God's help, I will do His will.

### **Conclusion**

This project has reached the aim of creating a structured disciple-making process for First Baptist Church of Garrettsville, Ohio. Two of the three stated goals were reached. The church now has a viable and achievable path forward for making disciples. This has been an extremely healthy and beneficial exercise for the members of FBCG. The first set of classes were helpful in encouraging people to engage the community and each other in the process of leading others into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. Reports are already coming of people who are using the material they were taught to train others in disciple-making. One man was thrilled that he was able to lead a friend into a relationship with Jesus Christ and get that friend to agree to go through the twelve segments of material he had just finished. Another man is discipling a man at his work. He is leading him to grow in his walk with the Lord.

The women's discipleship class is continuing with a study of a book of the Bible. Two of the men's discipleship classes have asked to continue meeting. Two other men who were not a part of a discipleship class have agreed to meet to go through the discipleship training material. The process has begun. It appears it is immediately having an impact within the church. Quarterly meetings are already planned for the end of this year and the first two quarters of next year. It appears the very act of preparing a process

for making disciples has created momentum toward making disciple-making a priority for the members and attendees of FBCG.

Disciple-making as a priority of the membership is an extremely desirable result, but now comes the hard work of maintaining vigilance in following God's plan. "Teach, Preach, Heal" must be more than a mantra. It must become a lifestyle for this body of believers as we seek to follow the admonition of our Lord and Savior to make disciples.

## APPENDIX 1

### CURRICULUM EVALUATION TOOL

The curriculum evaluation tool was used as part of the second project goal. An expert panel used this rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum.

<b>Curriculum Evaluation Tool</b>					
<b>1 = insufficient 2 = requires attention 3 = sufficient 4 = exemplary</b>					
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Comments</b>
The material is clearly relevant to the subject of disciple making.			1	2	Nice balance of theological instruction and practical application.
The material is biblical and theologically accurate.			1	2	
The objectives of the material are clear and consistent with disciple making.		1	1	1	
The material will serve to equip people to be disciple makers.			1	2	
The material is logical and applicable to most church members.			1	2	
The lessons are sufficiently thorough in their coverage of the subject.			1	2	The lesson material is solid—but I would like to see the subjects fleshed out just a little bit more. Better to have too much than just enough.
Overall, the lessons are clear and could be taught by another person in another context.			2	1	
Additional Comments		1		2	My one suggestion here would be to provide a list of sources for further study to help teachers and students who may want to pursue these ideas beyond this study.

## APPENDIX 2

### MINISTRY PLAN EVALUATION TOOL

This ministry plan evaluation tool was used as part of the third project goal. An expert panel utilized this rubric to evaluate the functionality of the ministry plan, communication processes, training elements, provision of discipleship resources, and action steps.

<b>Ministry Plan Evaluation Tool</b>					
<b>1 = insufficient 2 = requires attention 3 = sufficient 4 = exemplary</b>					
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Comments</b>
The plan is clearly relevant to the subject of disciple making.			1	2	
The concept is biblical and theologically accurate.			1	2	
The objectives of the plan are clear and doable.		1	1	1	The specifics of year 3 could be improved. Ideally, what will the disciples from Year 1 be doing in year 3?
The plan will serve to equip people to be disciple makers.			2	1	
The plan is logical and applicable to the FBCG context.			1	2	
The plan is sufficient to meet its objectives.			2	1	
Overall, the plan is clear and could be implemented in another context.		1	2		It is clear, realistic, specific yet still flexible enough to be adaptable to other contexts.
Additional Comments					

Other Comments:

## APPENDIX 3

### DISCIPLE-MAKING PRACTICES SURVEY

The purpose of this project is to understand current disciple-making practices among leaders, members, and regular attendees at First Baptist Church of Garrettsville, Ohio. The following survey was provided to project participants before and after the training to measure the change in frequency, quality, and quantity of the disciple-making habits of FBCG members and regular attendees.



## Disciple-Making Practices Survey

### Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current practices of disciple-making for the participant. This research is being conducted by David Gray for the purpose of gathering data for a ministry project at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In this research, you will answer the questions before the project, and you will answer the same questions after the project. 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.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ [ ] I agree to participate [ ] I do not agree to participate

**Directions:** The questions ask your opinion using the following scale. Please circle the answer that is most appropriate.

The scale is as follows:

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, DS = Disagree Somewhat,  
AS = Agree Somewhat, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree.

#	Question	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
1	I teach others about the Christian life.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
2	I share the Gospel of the Kingdom with others at least once a month.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
3	I serve those in need and less fortunate at least once a month.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
4	I am involved in an ongoing Bible Study with others outside of regular Sunday morning worship services.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
5	I think Christians should serve the poor.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
6	I believe taking part in community leadership is an important part of being a disciple.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
7	I know how to share the Gospel.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
8	I believe I have been trained to help another believer grow spiritually.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
9	I have a desire to be more involved in ministry activity.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
10	I believe I have been challenged at FBCG to use my spiritual gift(s).	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
11	I share my faith publicly at least once a week.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

#	Question	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
12	I think the pastor is the primary disciple maker of a church.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
13	I lack the information to share Christ with others.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
14	I lack the opportunity to make disciples.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
15	I am actively being disciplined by someone.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
16	I am actively discipling someone.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
17	I volunteer within my community.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
18	I am willing to be a part of an evangelism team.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
19	I am willing to lead an evangelism team.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
20	I am willing to be a regular part of an outreach to serve those in need.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
21	I am willing to pray out loud during church services.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
22	I meet to pray with others outside of church services.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
23	I am able to teach others how to pray.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
24	I enjoy worshipping with others.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
25	I bring people to worship with me at least twice a year.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

APPENDIX 4  
ANOVA AND TUKEY-KRAMER RESULTS

Table A1. ANOVA results

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	1426.13333	2	713.066667	4.3918062	0.02796599	3.55455715
Within Groups	2922.53333	18	162.362963			
Total	4348.66667	20				

Table A2. Tukey-Kramer results

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Women	5	509	101.80	218.70
Men	6	748	124.67	66.67
Congregation	10	1144	114.40	190.49

## APPENDIX 5

### TEACH, PREACH, HEAL DISCIPLE-MAKING PROCESS

This appendix contains the course outline for the “Teach, Preach, Heal” Disciple Making Process implemented by First Baptist Church of Garrettsville, Ohio. This course delves into the scriptural arguments for being and making disciples of Jesus Christ. Every participant is encouraged to develop ways they can be both disciples and disciple-makers in whatever context they find themselves.

## **Teach, Preach, Heal, Disciple-Making Process**

This twelve-part training is designed to explain the how and why of the “Teach, Preach, Heal, Disciple Making Process” being implemented by First Baptist Church of Garrettsville. This course will delve into the scriptural argument for being and making disciples of Jesus Christ. Every participant will be encouraged to develop ways they can be both disciples and disciple-makers in whatever context they find themselves.

### **Course Objectives**

1. Participants will understand the Biblical foundation of Teach, Preach, Heal.
2. Participants will be able to define some common Biblical terms.
3. Participants will know the basic layout and flow of the Bible.
4. Participants will have a greater knowledge in the use of spiritual disciplines, including but not limited to, prayer, meditation, service, etc.
5. Participants will develop a greater urgency to meet with others to share and develop their faith.
6. Participants will be encouraged to meet with others specifically for the purpose of discipleship.

### **Course Teaching Outline**

#### Segment One: Overview

1. Why are we here?
  - a. Teacher’s perspective
  - b. Learner’s perspective
2. Did Jesus have a method of disciple-making?
  - a. Matthew 4:23-10:5
  - b. Can we do it like Jesus?
3. Is this type of disciple-making consistent with the rest of the Bible?
  - a. Matthew 28
  - b. Luke 10
  - c. Ephesians 4
  - d. Are there other examples?

#### Segment Two: Defining some of the words we use.

1. What is a disciple?
2. Are there prerequisites for being a disciple?
3. What is the gospel?
4. Are there counterfeit gospels that may sound good?

#### Segment Three: Why do we need salvation?

1. How does Jesus bring us salvation?
2. What was accomplished on the cross?
3. What does it mean to be born again?
4. How do we receive the gift of salvation?

5. Why should a believer be baptized?

Segment Four: Where can we find truth?

1. The Old Testament
  - a. The Pentateuch of The Law
  - b. History
  - c. Poetry
  - d. Major Prophets
  - e. Minor Prophets
2. The New Testament
  - a. Gospels and History
  - b. Pauline Epistles
  - c. General Epistles
  - d. Revelation
3. The different focus of each Gospel

Segment Five: Spiritual Disciplines (Prayer)

1. What is prayer?
2. A model prayer. Matthew 6:9-13

Segment Six: Spiritual Disciplines continued.

1. The place of God's Word as a discipline.
  - a. Informs other disciplines.
  - b. Helps us understand God's will for the present.
2. Using God's word in prayer and other activities with others.

Segment Seven: Becoming a fruit bearing disciple.

1. Abiding in Christ. John 15:1-8
2. Meeting with others.
  - a. Developing intentional relationships for Christ.
  - b. Helping others develop relationships.
  - c. Maintaining intentional relationships.

Segment Eight: Developing your faith

1. Developing a devotional time.
2. Fasting
3. Solitude
4. Discovering your gifts

Segment Nine: Sharing your faith

1. Why should I share my faith?
2. How can I share my faith?
  - a. There are a lot of tools that can assist you.
  - b. The best method is sharing your own story.

Segment Ten: Growing with others.

1. Seek opportunities to teach and be taught.
2. Seek opportunities to preach and to receive preaching.
3. Seek to be a healing agent both individually and corporately with others.

4. Seek intentional relationships for the purpose of disciple-making.

Segment Eleven: Walking in the Spirit

1. Am I currently acting like a disciple of Jesus?
2. Am I currently helping others be disciples of Jesus?
3. Am I willing to use my present situation as an opportunity to make disciples?
4. Who will hold you accountable?

Segment Twelve

1. Will you act out of the flesh or the Spirit? Romans 8:5-7
2. Will you train your mind for battle? Ephesians 6:10-12
3. Will you dress properly? Ephesians 6:13-18
  - a. Truth
  - b. Righteousness
  - c. Gospel of peace
  - d. Faith
  - e. Salvation
  - f. Sword of the Spirit
4. Will you Teach, Preach, Heal?

## APPENDIX 6

### TEACH, PREACH, HEAL DISCIPLE-MAKING TEACHER NOTES

This appendix contains the teacher notes for the “Teach, Preach, Heal” Disciple Making Process implemented by First Baptist Church of Garrettsville, Ohio. Each segment represents approximately one hour of teaching time and is designed to be most effective with small groups.



## Teacher's Notes for Teach, Preach, Heal, Disciple-Making Process

Each segment represents approximately 1 hour of teaching time. This material will be shared 1 on 1, with groups of 3 to 5, and groups of 12 or more. We expect the lessons will be most effective with the 3 to 5 groups.

### Course Objectives

1. Participants will understand the biblical foundation of Teach, Preach, Heal.
2. Participants will be able to define some common biblical terms.
3. Participants will know the basic layout and flow of the Bible.
4. Participants will have a greater knowledge in the use of spiritual disciplines, including but not limited to, prayer, meditation, service, etc.
5. Participants will develop a greater urgency to meet with others to share and develop their faith.
6. Participants will be encouraged to meet with others specifically for the purpose of discipleship.

Segment One: This is a broad overview designed to probe the learner's knowledge and understanding while sharing how the writer of the Gospel of Matthew showed how Jesus developed his earliest disciples. This development process is revealed in the literary segment contained between Matthew 4:23 and 9:38. That is where we get the phrase "teach, preach, heal." A brief survey of other Scripture shows it is consistent with the rest of the Bible.

Segment Two: I have borrowed a definition of the gospel from Hull and Sobels,

The gospel is this: the Kingdom of God has come through Jesus of Nazareth. He is Christ, the King, God's one and only Son. He died on the cross for our sins, was buried, and was resurrected on the third day according to the Scriptures. In His great love and by His amazing grace God our Father saves everyone who repents of their sin, believes the gospel, and follows Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. When King Jesus returns on the last day, the great Day of Judgment, everyone who followed Him will enter the eternal Kingdom of God.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bill Hull and Ben Sobels, *The Discipleship Gospel: What Jesus Preached—We Must Follow* (Brentwood, TN: HIM, 2018), 109.

Segment Three: What is Salvation?

“The saving of man from the power and effects of sin.”<sup>2</sup>

This is another opportunity to make sure the student has a good grasp of their own salvation and how to help others. The discussion will be greatly impacted by the students needs.

Segment Four: An opportunity to talk about the beauty and power of the Scriptures while surfacing common objections and misunderstandings.

Segment Five: This should be handled as a learning lab with students being encouraged to voice prayers.

Segment Six: Helping students understand how to allow the Word of God to define and impact their present circumstances. The Word also can be used to judge what we hear or read from others.

Segment Seven: Walking in relationship with others will be stressed, in a purposeful way, to learn and do the will of God.

Segment Eight: A discussion of how to practice healthy disciplines and discover personal gifts.

Segment Nine: Each student should write out and/or share their salvation story.

Segment Ten: A discussion of ways and places that witnessing can happen and ways groups can form. This will be molded to and made personal for each student, especially in the smaller groups.

Segment Eleven: This is an accountability session. Challenging students to assess if they are living up to what they have been learning.

Segment Twelve: This is a review of everything that has been done so far. It will end with a challenge for the student to continue in the process of being a disciple and making disciples

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<sup>2</sup> Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed., Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 1049.

## APPENDIX 7

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF GARRETTSVILLE TEACH, PREACH, HEAL MINISTRY PLAN

This appendix contains the three-year ministry plan developed to implement the “Teach, Preach, Heal” Disciple Making Process at First Baptist Church, Garrettsville, Ohio.

## **First Baptist Church of Garrettsville “Teach, Preach, Heal” Ministry Plan**

### **The Plan Year 1**

#### **Pointed Teaching**

The first step is to begin to use both Sunday morning and Wednesday evening as opportunities to plant seeds about what the Bible says concerning making disciples. There should be a special emphasis on Matthew 9:35–38 and Ephesians 4:11–13 as well as Matthew 28:18–20 and Acts 1:8. The pastor and other teachers/leaders will be expected to use nearly every teaching occasion to inform and or remind the church of the scriptural demand to make disciples that can make disciples that make disciples. It will be stressed that disciple-making will happen inside and outside of the church walls. Some will be involved in work outside of the church while others will be primarily involved in work inside the church. The church may not be responsible for every ministry a church member participates in but will be responsible to each church member and expect each church member to be responsible to and for the church. This will be a part of bringing clarity to both the educational ministry as well as the whole church.

#### **Small Group Discipleship Training for Potential Leaders**

The next part of the first year of the plan will be to create ways men and women might have special, intense learning experiences where there is opportunity to address specific questions. These discipleship groups of approximately 2 to 5 members will be engaged with material developed to give the basics of the Christian walk and assess where various learners are as far as spiritual maturity is concerned. A syllabus and teacher’s notes will be provided to discipleship class members who will be expected to eventually replicate what they are taught with others.

#### **Periodic Leadership Training**

As leaders are developed there will be three to four seminars a year provided by the pastor and others that will help equip current and potential leaders with

how to help people become disciples that make disciples, how to recruit small group members, and how to increase their skills in Biblical exegesis and interpretation. These seminars will also be used to help people develop and practice spiritual disciplines such as prayer and Bible reading among other things.

### **Celebrate Ministries**

Find methods to publicly celebrate the ministry activity in and outside of the walls of FBCG by FBCG members. Much of the disciple-making done by FBCG members will be considered their own personal ministries but their membership and accountability will be with FBCG.

### **Coaching Made Available**

The pastor is a certified coach in a system called IDEA coaching. The pastor will meet once a month for one hour to coach individual leaders on how to fulfill their spiritual, family, and ministry goals.

## **The Plan Year 2**

### **Expand and Intensify**

Year two will continue and intensify the elements introduced in year one by continuing to multiply discipleship groups and stressing the importance of discipleship during every part of life. A periodic magazine will be developed to reenforce the concept of “Teach, Preach, Heal.” The periodic leadership training will continue to focus on real world application of the things we are teaching and give opportunity for adjusting curriculum plans. Teachers and ministry leaders will be asked to share some of their best practices so that everyone might continue to grow and that there will be a sense of camaraderie between all those teachers and/or leaders.

In year 2 those who were coached in year 1 will be encouraged to pursue coach training so that they might be available to coach others.

## **The Plan Year 3**

### **Multiply**

Year 3 will continue all that has gone before it to promote and refine the concept of “Teach, Preach, Heal” at First Baptist Church of Garrettsville. As suggested by Geiger and Peck churches need to develop a strong culture that have solid biblical conviction and workable constructs in order to build leaders.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development* (Nashville: B & H, 2016).

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## ABSTRACT

### DEVELOPING A STRUCTURED DISCIPLE-MAKING PROCESS AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN GARRETTSVILLE, OHIO

David Francis Gray, DEdMin  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2023  
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Robert L. Plummer

This project was designed to develop a structured disciple-making process at First Baptist Church of Garrettsville, Ohio. Chapter 1 gives the ministry context of FBCG and the goals and rationale for the project. Chapter 2 provides an exegesis of Matthew 9:35–38. This examination of Scripture demonstrates Matthew arranged his Gospel in a way that revealed one of the ways Jesus made disciples. Chapter 3 surveys several authors who discuss ideas about the nature of the disciple-making done by Jesus and how and if that should be continued today. Chapter 4 looks at the implementation of the project. That includes surveying FBCG members and regular attendees to discover their disciple-making habits and attitudes. Chapter 4 also details the process of creation and teaching the curriculum leading to a ministry plan for a disciple-making process. Chapter 5 reflects on the effectiveness of the project based on specific goals.

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