

Copyright © 2023 Troy Anthony Hamilton

All rights reserved. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has permission to reproduce and disseminate this document in any form by any means for purposes chosen by the Seminary, including without limitation, preservation or instruction.

EQUIPPING DISCIPLE-MAKERS AT ROCKY BAYOU  
BAPTIST CHURCH IN NICEVILLE, FLORIDA

---

A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

---

by  
Troy Anthony Hamilton  
December 2023

**APPROVAL SHEET**

EQUIPPING DISCIPLE-MAKERS AT ROCKY BAYOU  
BAPTIST CHURCH IN NICEVILLE, FLORIDA

Troy Anthony Hamilton

Read and Approved by:

Faculty Supervisor: Jeremy D. Jessen

Second Reader: Matthew D. Haste

Defense Date: October 3, 2023

I dedicate this project to the glory of my hero and savior, Jesus,  
and to my loving and gracious bride, Elizabeth.

I thank God for you both.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
PREFACE .....	viii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Context .....	1
Rationale .....	4
Purpose .....	6
Goals .....	6
Research Methodology .....	6
Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations.....	7
Conclusion .....	9
2. BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR EQUIPPING DISCIPLE-MAKERS AT ROCKY BAYOU BAPTIST CHURCH IN NICEVILLE, FLORIDA.....	10
Deuteronomy 6:4-9 .....	10
Fidelity to God (6:4) .....	10
Whole-Hearted Love for God (6:5-6, 8-9) .....	11
Teaching Others to Love God (6:7).....	13
Psalm 96:1-10 .....	14
Declare His Glory among the Nations (96:1-3).....	14
The Gods of the Nations Are False (96:4-5) .....	15
God’s People Must Be Passionate for the Nations to Worship Him (96:6-10).....	15

Chapter	Page
Matthew 28:18-20 .....	17
The Authority of Christ (28:18).....	17
The Mission of Christ (28:19) .....	19
The Presence of Christ (28:20).....	22
Ephesians 4:11-16 .....	23
The Gifts to the Church (4:11).....	23
The Ministry Purpose of Church Offices (4:12).....	24
The End Goal of Discipleship (4:13-16) .....	25
2 Timothy 2:1-3 .....	26
Be Strengthened by Grace in Christ (2:1).....	26
Make Disciples Who Will Make Disciples (2:2).....	27
Share in Suffering as a Good Soldier of Christ (2:3).....	28
Conclusion .....	29
<b>3. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR EQUIPPING DISCIPLE-MAKERS AT ROCKY BAYOU BAPTIST CHURCH IN NICEVILLE, FLORIDA.....</b>	<b>30</b>
Motivated by Glory .....	30
Discipleship as Calling.....	32
Spiritual Maturity.....	39
Suffering Discipleship.....	45
Conclusion .....	50
<b>4. DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT FOR EQUIPPING DISCIPLE-MAKERS AT ROCKY BAYOU BAPTIST CHURCH IN NICEVILLE, FLORIDA.....</b>	<b>51</b>
Preparation for “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” Course (Weeks 1-4).....	51
Preparation for the Course .....	51
Promotion for the Course.....	53

Chaper	Page
Implementation of “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” Course (Weeks 5-16) .....	55
Part 1: “Being a Disciple” .....	55
Part 2: “Making Disciples” .....	58
Follow-Up of “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” Course (Weeks 17-20).....	63
<b>5. EVALUATION OF PROJECT FOR EQUIPPING DISCIPLE- MAKERS AT ROCKY BAYOU BAPTIST CHURCH IN NICEVILLE, FLORIDA.....</b>	<b>65</b>
Evaluation of the Project’s Purpose .....	65
Evaluation of the Project’s Goals.....	65
Strengths of the Project .....	71
Weaknesses of the Project.....	73
What I Would Do Differently .....	74
Theological Reflections .....	74
Personal Reflections.....	75
Conclusion .....	76
<b>Appendix</b>	
1. CURRICULUM LESSON PLANS.....	77
2. TRAINING CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC .....	108
3. DISCIPLESHIP PRACTICES INVENTORY (DPI).....	110
4. SERMON NOTES FROM JANUARY 8 AND JANUARY 15, 2023 .....	113
5. PROMOTIONAL FLYER FOR DISCIPLESHIP COURSE.....	127
6. “THE FIVE POINTS OF THE GOSPEL” .....	129
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>131</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Results of first DPI (Feb. 12) at start of “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” .....	66
2. Average DPI Scores (from 6 pt Likert Scale), before and after “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” Course .....	69
3. Numerical DPI scores, before and after “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” .....	70



## PREFACE

This project on discipleship was made possible by the investment of many amazing Christians in my life. My parents taught me the gospel at a young age and raised me in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Mama, thank you for fasting and praying for me—year after year. Dad, thank you for faithfully reading the Bible to our family every night and showing us the Father.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the men who discipled me. Pastor Sahl taught me as a child about the power, greatness, and holiness of God. Pastor Malone showed me as a young teenager the beauty of God's grace in Christ. Pastor Schneider instilled in me as a young man reverence for our sovereign, triune God. Pastor "PG" Green put up with the antics of an overly zealous college student and helped me follow Jesus and learn to lead others in following him.

Bob Tebow took me under his wing as a young missionary apprentice in the Philippines and taught me to listen to the Holy Spirit and walk by faith and not by sight. His passion for evangelism continues to inspire me. In Africa, Dr. Charles Woodrow showed me what it means to make disciples of Christ and how to suffer with joy for the Father's glory. Pastor Rob Andrews modeled faithful pastoral ministry to me while I was a young minister under his charge. As a senior pastor today, I often think: "What would Rob do?" Teammates of mine in Central Asia (whose names cannot be written) taught me by their Christ-like examples to love my enemies.

I thank God for the faculty of Southern Seminary who are committed to the authority of God's Word and personally invested in training the next generation of ministers to fulfill the Great Commission. The longer I studied at SBTS, the deeper I understood the privilege. I am especially grateful for my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Jessen,

who helped me sharpen the scope of this project and tighten up my writing. He did this with grace, encouraging me to persevere to the end.

The elders and members of Rocky Bayou Baptist Church significantly assisted me with this project. The elders helped plan the “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” course, provided input for the curriculum, and gave up important teaching time so that they could rotate through and participate in the class. It is a joy to serve Christ with a true “band of brothers.” I remain impressed and encouraged by our church members who eagerly signed up for this course, showed up, and stepped out in faith. I am truly blessed and grateful to pastor Rocky!

My family sacrificially supported me through the last three years of this project. Grace, Tim, and Christine, thank you for continually responding to me with patience and encouragement when I was on my laptop so many evenings and Saturdays. I am so proud of you and pray you will follow Jesus all of your days. I do not have the capacity to express with words my gratitude to my selfless, loving wife Beth for her enduring support. Sweetheart, thank you. I love you with all my heart.

Jesus, I love you even more than all of these. Thank you for loving me first, for giving your life to save me from my sins, and for calling me to be your disciple.

Troy Hamilton

Niceville, Florida

December 2023

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Faithful disciples of Jesus Christ make disciples. It is a core part of the calling to follow Christ. He modeled it for his followers and commanded them to do it with his last words (Matt 28:18-20). Rocky Bayou Baptist Church’s vision statement—written everywhere from the church website to worship bulletins—states, “We exist to know him and to make him known.” These two concepts are inseparable. We cannot give away what we do not have, but we are self-deceived if we think we truly know him but make no effort to make him known to others. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.”<sup>1</sup> Rocky Bayou Baptist Church (RBBC) endeavors to worship Christ with our words, our hearts, and our actions, but we still have room to grow in obedience-based discipleship.

#### **Context**

It has been a privilege to serve as senior pastor at RBBC in the military community of Niceville, Florida, for the past seven years. RBBC is committed to biblical truth. The elders and members prioritize expository preaching and teaching. Elders and quite a few members are gifted Bible teachers, equipped to unpack and apply the Old and New Testament well in Sunday School classes, Adult Bible Fellowships, Life Groups, and inductive Bible studies. Church members demonstrate value for the authority of the Scripture in their lives.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan, 1975), 47.

Members are quick to apply biblical truth with their time and resources. Most give faithfully to the church and are eager to serve in areas of need. Twice a week, a team of forty volunteers gather on campus to tutor struggling schoolchildren from our community. A growing number of families are fostering and adopting children. “Action-oriented” church members—many from a military background—are quick to volunteer for disaster response projects in our community and state following hurricanes. Our elder team consists of six lay elders and two staff elders. All serve the church as pastors, devoting many hours a week to shepherding and praying for the members of their church family.

RBBC currently supports eighteen missionary families, most of whom were sent out by the church and are under the spiritual watch care of the elders. Many serve among unreached people groups in difficult places. Our Missions Team, led by a retired special forces general, takes seriously the mandate to send and support missionaries well. The church regularly sends out short-term teams to encourage our missionaries and are working to raise up the next generation who will go plant churches among the unreached.

Theology, service, and missions are strengths at RBBC, but the church needs to focus more on outreach at home. Niceville is a fairly homogenous community, but RBBC is even more demographically homogenous than the town. Simply put, church members tend to cluster up with people who are like-minded. Members with children in public schools have mentioned they are made to feel “less spiritual” by the home-school majority; others have brought up a general attitude of elitism. The elders recognize a tendency of women in the church to socialize in cliques, unintentionally leaving out the lady less versed in Christian culture. A military, home-school family has a better chance of being invited to visit a Life Group than a guest who has just gotten out of jail. Visitors from ethnic minorities or lower-class backgrounds have shared that they feel out of place at RBBC.

RBBC needs to grow when it comes to one-on-one discipleship.<sup>2</sup> Certainly, Christian discipleship transcends one-on-one relationships; Jesus was constantly discipling the twelve as a group. We do disciple one another through Adult Bible Fellowships, Life Groups, and our men and women's ministries; however, transparency and accountability in these contexts are often lacking. It is easy to sit in the back of the room, take in a lot of Bible knowledge, but say little and make no commitments for which others might hold us accountable. Paul disciplined Timothy by investing personal time in him and taught him to make other disciples. Every disciple of Jesus should be a disciple-maker. The majority of members at RBBC are not in Paul-Timothy type discipleship relationships.

Faulty expectations are a key inhibitor to disciple-making at RBBC. Many of our church members think that discipling someone means simply working through a theological curriculum with someone, versus growing in Christ together through a personal relationship. Others think that to mentor someone they must be a theological expert or a flawless Christian worthy of imitation in every aspect of life. The church has inadvertently created a theologically focused, falsely pious Christianity, where redeemed sinners are afraid to let one another know how depraved they really are (in direct contrast to Jas 5:16) or that they do not have all the Bible answers. Who would want to let someone close if it might lead to disappointment? Others have unknowingly fallen prey to the American model of consumer Christianity; they want to sit back and consume theological teaching without having to obey Christ's call to make disciples.

We send missionaries from our church to unreached people groups and work hard to support them in their ministries, but we are not doing a great job reaching our lost neighbors. In a transient military community, our church regularly welcomes new families, but many of these were already theologically-minded Christians who researched

---

<sup>2</sup> The process of Christians helping one another grow in following Jesus.

us online. Recently, we examined our membership records: they show that out of the 253 new adult members who have joined our church over the last ten years, only eighteen were saved at RBBC. Most RBBC members are involved in each other's lives (and in community activities, such as sports), but few invite their neighbors and colleagues to church. Few regularly invite unbelievers into their homes for dinner with the intent to share Jesus with them. In a community that prioritizes achievement, actively sharing Jesus is quite risky to career advancement and social status (Matt 5:10-11).

I felt compelled to address the issue of discipleship and evangelistic outreach through this doctoral project. I pray that the Holy Spirit used this project to help make every RBBC member a disciple-maker for Christ's glory.

### **Rationale**

Faithful disciples of Jesus Christ make disciples. Jesus modeled and commanded it (Matt 28:16-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8). Paul modeled and commanded it, telling Timothy, "And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2).<sup>3</sup> And yet many of our church members at RBBC have never actively engaged in disciple-making. There are many reasons for this lack of obedience: busyness, insecurity, fear, apathy, and lack of understanding of what life-on-life discipleship entails. I pray that this project has helped our church become more faithful to Christ.

Joyful disciples of Jesus Christ make disciples. When Christians step out in faith, actively engage in relationally sharing Jesus with unbelievers, and share their lives with growing Christians, the Holy Spirit strengthens their own faith. Theology becomes more alive in their minds and hearts. Their joy in Christ deepens. The hearts of RBBC's church members long for authentic discipleship; the COVID-19 pandemic taught us how

---

<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations come from the *English Standard Version (ESV)*.

much we need to be in relationship with one another. Youth and singles have sought it out in groups, sometimes through formal church events and often through informal gatherings. A group of men and women at RBBC have already begun lay-led “quad” groups. My hope is that these groups will continue but multiply every year to form more groups that will invite non-believers to participate. Like embers in a campfire, when sincere Christians touch each other’s lives with God’s Word and prayer, the joyful love in their hearts for Christ grows together.

Courageous disciples of Jesus Christ make disciples. It may be easier to remain on the theological plain, hiding in the comfort of their libraries, but God has equipped his people for spiritual battle (Eph 6:10-20). He has called Christians to a ministry of reconciliation as his ambassadors (2 Cor 5:20-21). When Christians step out in faith and build relationships with people from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds with the intention of introducing them to Jesus, they grow closer to Jesus himself. Courage begets courage, and our community and nation need courageous Christians who stand up for Christ and the “least of these” (Matt 25:40).

Compassionate disciples of Jesus make disciples. Jesus made it clear that he is the exclusive way to God the Father (John 14:6). He also told Nicodemus that whoever does not believe in him is condemned (John 3:18). How can people believe in Jesus if they have never heard the gospel message with understanding (Rom 10:14)? How can Christians truly love their neighbors if they never have the compassion (and courage) to share Jesus with them? How can they truly love their fellow church members if they fail to engage with them in one-on-one discipleship?

Theologically minded disciples of Jesus make disciples. One member of RBBC recently proposed to me that our church is indeed fulfilling its God-given purpose in our community by being the “theologically minded” church to whom people could migrate when they tired from “seeker-centered” churches that have more shallow teaching. I disagree. My prayer is that RBBC will become a church that attracts both

mature Christians and brand-new believers in Jesus. The more we seek to answer the tough questions with which people are wrestling, the deeper we will dive into Scripture. My prayer is that RBBC will increasingly become a church filled with faithful, joyful, courageous, compassionate, biblically deep disciples of Jesus Christ.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to raise up and equip disciple-makers at Rocky Bayou Baptist Church in Niceville, Florida.

### **Goals**

The following goals helped progressively frame out this project to raise up and equip obedient disciple-makers at RBBC:

1. The first goal was to assess the current knowledge and practice of disciple-making among a group of twenty to thirty volunteer members of RBBC.
2. The second goal was to develop a ten-week discipleship training curriculum entitled “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker.”
3. The third goal was to modify the knowledge and practice of disciple-making among the group of twenty to thirty volunteer members of RBBC.

A specific research methodology was created to measure the successful completion of these three goals.<sup>4</sup> This methodology is described in the following section.

### **Research Methodology**

Successful completion of this project depended upon the completion of these three goals. The first goal was to assess the current knowledge and practice of disciple-making among a group of twenty to thirty volunteer members of RBBC. This goal was measured by administering the Discipleship Practices Inventory (DPI) to this group of elder-approved church members who volunteered to honestly complete the DPI and then

---

<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.



to later complete a discipleship training course. This goal was considered successfully met when the group of twenty to thirty members completed the DPI and the inventory had been analyzed yielding a clearer picture of the current discipleship practices among RBBC members.

The second goal was to develop a ten-week discipleship training curriculum entitled “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker.” This training material sought to increase church members’ knowledge about biblical discipleship responsibilities and practices and to equip members to implement what they have learned weekly in authentic one-on-one disciple-making relationships. This goal was measured by the elders of RBBC who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, and applicability of the curriculum. This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criteria met or exceeded the sufficient level.

The third goal was to modify the knowledge and practice of disciple-making among the group of twenty to thirty volunteer members of RBBC. During the ten-week discipleship training, emphasis was placed on reaching out to unbelieving members of our community with the purpose of sharing the gospel with them and building disciple-making relationships. This goal was measured by administering the DPI to the church members one month after they had completed the “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” training. This goal was considered successfully met when the t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-course DPI scores.

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

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

*Evangelism* is “the proclamation of the gospel to unbelievers (from the Greek εὐαγγελίζω, to announce good news).”<sup>5</sup>

*Disciples* are “followers of Jesus Christ”<sup>6</sup> (from the Greek μαθητής, learner).

*Discipleship* is the process of “growing as followers of Jesus and helping others to do the same.”<sup>7</sup> It includes obedience, repentance, submission, commitment, and perseverance.<sup>8</sup>

*Disciple-making (or making disciples)* happens when “the church builds and multiplies Jesus’s disciples by announcing the gospel, baptizing those who repent and believe in the name of the triune God, communicating Jesus’s teachings so they obey him, and training them to multiply themselves through the making of other disciples (Matt. 28:18-20).”<sup>9</sup>

One limitation applied to this project. The accuracy of the DPIs depended upon the twenty to thirty volunteer members filling out the surveys as honestly as possible. To mitigate this limitation, I allowed them to fill them out anonymously.

Two delimitations applied to this project. First, this project took place over a twenty-week time frame. This allowed adequate time for me to prepare the “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” curriculum, obtain elder approval of the curriculum, and conduct the training over a ten-week time frame as well as allowed adequate time for the distribution and completion of the post-training DPI assessment. Second, this project was limited to a maximum of thirty adult (eighteen years or older) church members.

---

<sup>5</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 1241.

<sup>6</sup> Trent C. Butler, ed., *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Holman Bible, 1991), 362.

<sup>7</sup> Bobby Jamieson, *Growing One Another: Discipleship in the Church*, Healthy Church Study Guides (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 19.

<sup>8</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Christ’s Call to Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 17-23.

<sup>9</sup> Gregg R. Allison, *The Baker Compact Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016), 63.

## **Conclusion**

Jesus has called his disciples to make disciples of all the nations. Sadly, too few American Christians are faithful to this calling, including members of RBBC. I pray that God continues to use this project to raise up and equip more disciple-makers at our church, in our own community, for his glory. We want to be a church that truly knows him and makes him known to all people. This next chapter presents biblical and theological reasons for why every disciple of Jesus must be a disciple-maker. Chapter 3 discusses what it will take for more members of RBBC to become disciple-makers. Chapter 4 describes my project to raise up and equip more disciple-makers at RBBC, and chapter 5 evaluates the project.

CHAPTER 2  
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR  
EQUIPPING DISCIPLE-MAKERS AT ROCKY  
BAYOU BAPTIST CHURCH IN  
NICEVILLE, FLORIDA

This chapter examines five passages—two from the Old Testament and three from the New Testament—that establish the biblical foundation and command for all disciples of Jesus Christ to engage in disciple-making. Because the Bible teaches that Christians must make disciples, it is imperative that members of Rocky Bayou Baptist Church be equipped to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

**Deuteronomy 6:4-9**

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 instructs that the highest motivation for the people of God in their knowledge of him should be love. Strong fidelity to God is foundational for making disciples of Jesus Christ.

**Fidelity to God (6:4)**

Moses wrote, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deut 6:4). This expression of fidelity to God became known in Jewish tradition as the *Shema*, based upon the injunction of its first word: “Hear!” Eugene Merrill explains that “to hear,” in Hebrew lexicography, is tantamount to “to obey,” especially in covenant contexts such as this.<sup>1</sup> Jewish rabbinical scholarship understood the *Shema* to summarize the heart of the law. Merrill elaborates, “So much so did the centrality of this confession find root in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, New American Commentary, vol. 4 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 139.

Jewish consciousness that to this very day the observant Jew will recite the *Shema* at least twice daily.”<sup>2</sup>

This statement of fidelity to and unity of God reflects the first commandment: “You shall have no other gods before me” (Deut 5:7). Peter Craigie notes that the Israelites had learned about the uniqueness and power of their God over the false gods of Egypt when he delivered them from their Egyptian bondage: “It was because they had experienced the living presence of their God in history that the Israelites could call the Lord *our God*. Thus the oneness and reality of the Lord were practical knowledge to the people.”<sup>3</sup> Earl Kalland agrees, saying, “While the primary assertion of v.4 is that there is only one true God, it is also asserted that this true God is Israel’s God. The Israelites should acknowledge no other god . . . . Furthermore, he is Israel’s God, and they have entered into a covenant-treaty with him.”<sup>4</sup>

### **Whole-Hearted Love for God (6:5-6, 8-9)**

The central command of the *Shema* is summarized in verse 5: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” Jesus claimed that this is the greatest commandment in the Law, and that following it will bring life (Matt 22:37; Mark 12:29-30; Luke 10:27).

Duane Christensen suggests that the use of לבב (*lēbāb*, heart) and נפש (*nephesh*, being, soul-life) indicate a “distinction of some sort is being made between mental and emotional energy and activity. In terms of modern depth psychology, we would say that our love for God is to embrace the whole of our mind, both conscious and unconscious.”<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 139.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 93.

<sup>4</sup> Earl S. Kalland, *Deuteronomy*, in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, *Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and 1,2 Samuel*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 64.

<sup>5</sup> Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1-21:9*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 6A (Dallas: Word Books, 2001), 143.

He suggests that loving God with all our might (מאד, *maad*) refers to self-discipline of the will.<sup>6</sup> Merrill elaborates on the distinctives of each word. He explains that in Old Testament anthropology, the heart is “the seat of the intellect, equivalent to the mind or rational part of humankind,” while the soul “refers to the invisible part of the individual, the person qua person including the will and sensibilities.” Strength denotes “the physical side with all its functions and capacities.”<sup>7</sup>

Kalland has a simpler view. He believes that command here is “not a study in faculty psychology. It is rather a gathering of terms to indicate the totality of a person’s commitment of self in the purest and noblest intentions of trust and obedience toward God.”<sup>8</sup> Craigie agrees with this perspective. He summarizes that the Israelites “were called upon to love God with their whole beings—*with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*”<sup>9</sup>

Verse 6 emphasizes that the commandments through which the Israelites were to demonstrate their love for the Lord should be “on your heart.” Christensen explains, “The people are to internalize the law, exactly as Jeremiah saw so clearly when he spoke of a new covenant in which YHWH declares: ‘I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts’ (Jer 31:31-33).”<sup>10</sup> God’s revelation of the law through Moses was intended to shape the daily life of his people by first penetrating the core of their being.

Fickle human beings need constant reminders to love God whole-heartedly. False Ammonite deities may not tempt today, but the false gods of pleasure, materialism, and power are constantly seeking to seduce Christians away from whole-hearted devotion

---

<sup>6</sup> Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1-21:9*, 143.

<sup>7</sup> Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 140.

<sup>8</sup> Kalland, *Deuteronomy*, 64.

<sup>9</sup> Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 93.

<sup>10</sup> Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1-21:9*, 143.

to God. Moses gave the Israelites visual reminders of fidelity to the Lord: “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deut 6:8-9). Many Jews to this day take this quite literally with the use of *phylacteries* and *mezuzah*, sadly at times forgetting that God’s intention was to write his covenant on their hearts.<sup>11</sup> The central teaching of the *Shema* is that loving, serving, and pleasing God should be the core motivation for all that his people do throughout their day and throughout their lives, including ministry.

### **Teaching Others to Love God (6:7)**

Moses instructed the Israelites to talk of God’s commands throughout the day and to diligently pass them on to others, starting with the discipleship of their children. Kalland explains, “The people were not to concern themselves only with their own attitudes toward the Lord. They were to concern themselves with impressing these attitudes on their children as well. The Israelites were to talk about God’s commands always, whether at home or on the road.”<sup>12</sup> Merrill gives a striking image of discipleship:

So much so is this the case that the covenant recipient must impress the words of covenant faith into the thinking of his children by inscribing them there with indelible sharpness and precision . . . . The image is that of the engraver of a monument who takes hammer and chisel in hand and with painstaking care etches a text into the face of a solid slab of granite. The sheer labor of such a task is daunting indeed, but once done the message is there to stay. Thus it is that the generations of Israelites to come must receive and transmit the words of the Lord’s everlasting covenant revelation.<sup>13</sup>

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 teaches that pure, passionate, and complete love for God motivates God’s people to share their love of God with others throughout the day whether

---

<sup>11</sup> Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1-21:9*, 143.

<sup>12</sup> Kalland, *Deuteronomy*, 66.

<sup>13</sup> Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 142.

at home or while walking “by the way” (v. 7). Making disciples begins at home with physical children but should continue beyond to spiritual children.

### **Psalm 96:1-10**

Psalm 96:1-10 demonstrates that a passion for God’s glory should compel Christians to declare his glory to all the nations, including their own. This evangelistic passion is the foundation and first step for obeying Christ’s Great Commission.

#### **Declare His Glory among the Nations (96:1-3)**

The command to make God known among the nations did not begin with the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20, although there Jesus clarified the impetus and directives of the task for his disciples. The Old Testament indicates that God had a desire for the nations to know and worship him. David cried out in Psalm 67:3-4, “Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth.”

Psalm 96 invites the nations to sing a “new song” (v. 1) to the Lord. It would be a new song for the nations, because they had not yet heard of God’s creative and redemptive acts.<sup>14</sup> The psalmist calls for God’s covenant people to “declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!” (v. 3). Daniel Estes writes, “This song is to go out to all political entities and ethnicities . . . . The praise of the Lord should be public and universal, not private and limited, so that all humanity can hear this new song.”<sup>15</sup> Marvin Tate agrees with Estes about the psalmist’s intended scope, claiming, “The proclamation is directed toward the people and nations of the world. The

---

<sup>14</sup> John Goldingay, *Psalms*, vol. 3, *Psalms 90-150*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 103.

<sup>15</sup> Daniel J. Estes, *Psalms 73-150: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, New American Commentary, vol. 13b (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2019), 111.



news of Yahweh’s saving work should be spread abroad day after day, until all people and nations know about his glory.”<sup>16</sup>

### **The Gods of the Nations Are False (96:4-5)**

The psalmist reminds us that the Lord is great and deserving of all praise; therefore, he should be respected and worshipped by all of humanity. The gods of the nations are counterfeit (vv. 4-5). William VanGemeren states, “Yahweh alone is God and all other deities are ‘fakes.’ They cannot be gods, because Yahweh alone has made heaven.”<sup>17</sup> This conviction runs counter to the relativism and universalism proclaimed by our “tolerant” society. Estes boldly concludes, “Human religions, then, are not alternative paths that all lead to the same God; and Psalm 96 leaves no room for syncretism or henotheism.”<sup>18</sup> John Goldingay agrees, “As is usual in the Bible, the psalm does not reckon we should be respectful of other people’s religions. It is more important to honor the real God.”<sup>19</sup>

### **God’s People Must Be Passionate for the Nations to Worship Him (96:6-10)**

The Lord God is truly worthy of worship: “Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary” (v. 6). All humans are incurable worshippers, for they cannot help but ascribe and declare value to impressive (“glorious”) things that stop them in their tracks. But humans will inadvertently worship lesser things, such as themselves or their experiences, unless they are called (disciplined) to worship the glorious One who is truly worthy of all worship. Verses 7-9 call all “families of the

---

<sup>16</sup> Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 20 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 512.

<sup>17</sup> Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, *Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 621.

<sup>18</sup> Estes, *Psalms 73-150*, 112.

<sup>19</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:104.

peoples” to ascribe glory to the Lord and to join the Israelites in worship of the true God. Estes writes, “Because Yahweh reigns over all peoples, not just the covenant nation of Israel, he deserves universal praise from all who live in his domain. His glory and strength always give humans adequate reason to praise him, so all the families of the peoples are to give to the Lord the glory due to him.”<sup>20</sup>

Who are these “families of the peoples” called by the psalmist to ascribe glory and strength to the Lord in verse 7? Goldingay postulates, “‘Families of the peoples’ might suggest the peoples as belonging to different ethnic groups.”<sup>21</sup> Tate agrees, “‘Families’ is a difficult word to define in precise sociological terms, but in general it refers to the subdivisions of human society, basically the extended family, tribe, clan, etc.; subdivisions based on kinship and common interests.”<sup>22</sup> Revelation 5:8-10 describes a heavenly scene of worship (also with a new song) in which the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders cry out to Jesus, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

God’s Old Testament people Israel were to work to this end. God’s plan was for Israel to call out to the pagan nations to worship the true King: “Say among the nations, ‘The Lord reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity’” (v. 10). Estes writes, “The psalmist calls Israel to testify of the Lord to the nations because Israel’s calling was to point the world to Yahweh the true God and King.”<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Estes, *Psalms 73-150*, 112.

<sup>21</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:105.

<sup>22</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 514.

<sup>23</sup> Estes, *Psalms 73-150*, 112.

As the new covenant people of God (Matt 26:28; 1 Cor 11:25), Christians should be even more passionate about making God’s glory known among the nations. We have the completed story of Christ, the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20), and the promise that one day there will be members of every nation, tribe, and language group gathered around the throne of God, crying out in worship, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” (Rev 7:9-10). Estes concludes, “Psalm 96 reassures the world that is scarred by the damaging effects of sin that the reign of the Lord will bring stability, equity, and righteousness; and thus he will satisfy the deepest longings of humans. All nations and ethnicities need to hear and declare the greatness and goodness of the Lord.”<sup>24</sup> Christians should be passionate for God’s glory, and passionate about declaring his glory to the nations, including our own. This evangelistic call is the first step in obeying Christ’s Great Commission.

### **Matthew 28:18-20**

Matthew 28:18-20 records Jesus’s final command to his disciples to make disciples of all nations with his delegated authority. This text, known as the Great Commission, is the culmination and crescendo of Matthew’s Gospel. Here, Jesus announces his authority, gives his mission, and promises his presence.

#### **The Authority of Christ (28:18)**

The Great Commission begins with the resurrected Christ’s appearing to his disciples and saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matt 28:18). How did Jesus, as the pre-existent Second Person of the Trinity, gain divine authority?

Authority is a key theme in Matthew’s Gospel, and Jesus had already made controversial statements about his authority. In Matthew 9:6, he claimed authority

---

<sup>24</sup> Estes, *Psalms 73-150*, 113.

(ἐξουσίαν, *exousian*) given to the Son of Man (cf. Dan 7:14) to forgive sins when he healed the paralytic. His audience clearly understood that only God had this kind of authority. In Matthew 11:27, he made the incredible claim “All things have been handed over to me by my Father.” One thing is clear: the only way that Jesus’s claims of divine authority are true is if he truly is God!

But what kind of authority did Jesus gain post-resurrection? Donald Hagner explains, “The passive verb assumes God as the acting subject: God has given Jesus this comprehensive sovereignty over the whole of the created order . . . . From the risen Jesus, however, such a claim has all the more convincing power.”<sup>25</sup> Leon Morris relates this authority to the resurrected Christ’s reversal of his *kenosis* (cf. Phil 2:5-8): “Now he has received the fullest possible authority, for it is authority *in heaven and on earth*. He is making clear that the limitations that applied throughout the incarnation no longer apply to him. He has supreme authority throughout the universe.”<sup>26</sup>

As God the Son, Jesus held positional authority from eternity past (though he voluntarily limited it in function for a time through his incarnation as a full human being). By accomplishing his mission of redemption on the cross and rising from the dead, Jesus earned the authority of a victorious hero—the kind of authority that is earned through valor (cf. Phil 2:9-11).

Jesus always had all authority in heaven and earth positionally as God, but now he also has all authority and loyalty in his disciple’s hearts as their redeemer and hero. He earned this at the cross. Based on this authority, he commissions his disciples to bring his gospel to the nations. Hagner states, “This is to provide them in turn with authority and

---

<sup>25</sup> Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33B (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 886.

<sup>26</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 745-46.

supply them with confidence as they go.”<sup>27</sup> D. A. Carson agrees, explaining, “Because he *now* has this authority, *therefore* his disciples are to go and make disciples—i.e., the dawning of the new age of messianic authority changes the circumstances and impels his disciples forward to a universal ministry.”<sup>28</sup>

Obedying Christ’s command is not optional for the true disciple. Leon Morris makes the point that instead of Jesus telling his disciples what he would do with his authority, he enlightened them about “its implications for those who follow him.”<sup>29</sup> Stewart Weber agrees, writing, “Our lives belong not to us but to the One who died to purchase our freedom from sin and death. Along with our freedom, he purchased our availability and usefulness to him as tools for the conduct of his ministry. We rob him of his right when we fail to fulfill his marching orders.”<sup>30</sup>

### **The Mission of Christ (28:19)**

Jesus commanded his disciples (then and now), “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:18-20a). Hagner explains that “make disciples” (μαθητεύσατε, *mathateusate*) is the strongest imperative verb here.<sup>31</sup> The words translated “go,” “baptizing,” and “teaching” are “three syntactically subordinate participles that take on an imperatival force because of the main verb.”<sup>32</sup> Weber writes, “The central command is make disciples. At the heart of our

---

<sup>27</sup> Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 886.

<sup>28</sup> D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 9, *Matthew and Mark*, 23-670, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 595.

<sup>29</sup> Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 746.

<sup>30</sup> Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew*, *Holman New Testament Commentary*, vol. 1 (Nashville: B&H, 2000), 482.

<sup>31</sup> Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 886-87.

<sup>32</sup> Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 886-87.

mission is the reproduction in others of what Jesus has produced in us: faith, obedience, growth, authority, compassion, love, and a bold, truthful message as his witnesses. They were learners commanded to produce more learners.”<sup>33</sup> Some Christians wrongly assume the Great Commission is primarily about evangelism, but that is only the beginning of the mission Jesus gave us. The end is discipleship.

If our goal is to make disciples, what then is a disciple of Jesus? Hagner defines a disciple as a “learner” or “pupil.”<sup>34</sup> Carson claims that disciples “are those who hear, understand, and obey Jesus’ teaching . . . . [I]t is binding on *all* Jesus’ disciples to make others what they themselves are—disciples of Jesus Christ.”<sup>35</sup> Morris explains that a true disciple will be a whole-hearted follower and lover of Jesus:

In this Gospel a disciple is both a learner and a follower; a disciple takes Jesus as his teacher and learns from him, and a disciple also follows Jesus. The life of a disciple is different because of his attachment to Jesus. The Master is not giving a command that will merely secure nominal adherence to a group, but one that will secure wholehearted commitment to a person . . . . Jesus’ disciples are people for whom a life has been given in ransom (20:28) and who are committed to the service of the Master, who not only took time to teach his disciples but who died for them and rose again. Those who are disciples of such a leader are committed people. And, of course, this is the kind of disciple that he looks for his followers to make.<sup>36</sup>

Morris’s definition rings true. Paul said that we are not our own, for we have been bought with a price (1 Cor 6:20). Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matt 16:24).

The substance of Christ’s command to make disciples is challenging, but so is the extent: “of all nations” (Matt 28:19). Weber explains that “the word translated nations is the plural of *ethnos*, meaning ‘peoples, ethnic groups’ as in 24:14 . . . . He was hinting

---

<sup>33</sup> Weber, *Matthew*, 484.

<sup>34</sup> Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 887.

<sup>35</sup> Carson, *Matthew*, 596.

<sup>36</sup> Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 746.

that their fulfillment of their commission would ultimately lead to his second coming.”<sup>37</sup> Thus, “the nations” we are to reach are not just the geo-political nations of the world—lines drawn on our maps—but every people group on earth! This understanding of the word “nation” is consistent with the Old Testament commands to declare God’s glory “among the peoples” (1 Chr 16) and to the “families of the peoples” (Ps 96). It also points to the final fruit of the church’s faithful witness: the “ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Rev 5:9).

The imperative participle “go” makes clear that the church is to now have an intentionally outward push with the gospel, taking the message of salvation through faith in Christ to each and every people group on earth. But it also means that those not “called” to the mission field are not off the hook; they must go across the street to make disciples. Weber explains,

*Going* means more than traveling across geographical borders, although this is part of Jesus’ meaning. The point is that we believers are active; we are not inert. *Going* means crossing boundaries to make disciples—going across the street, going to dinner with an unbelieving friend, going into the inner city, going beyond one’s comfort zone to make the gospel accessible to the lost. Living life is “going” with a purpose, every day.<sup>38</sup>

Part of the process of making disciples is baptizing new believers in Christ. This public identifying with Jesus is often the catalyst for persecution for new Christians in much of the world. But baptism is not an option for the Christian. I served with a church-planting team in a part of Central Asia where local Christians are severely persecuted. When it came time to baptize our first disciples of Christ, we were short on standing water and thus baptized this young couple in a pine-box that we lined with plastic and filled with well-water. During the ceremony, we realized that our “baptismal” looked just like a coffin, reminding us of the cost of discipleship. Shortly thereafter, this

---

<sup>37</sup> Weber, *Matthew*, 484.

<sup>38</sup> Weber, *Matthew*, 484-85.

young couple's extended family made an attempt on their life because they were now following Jesus.

Jesus gave his disciples a long-term but self-perpetuating task with his last participial command: "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:20). Morris explains that this is "not just education, but Jesus is concerned with a way of life . . . . So there is to be instruction and there is to be purity of life."<sup>39</sup> Weber emphasizes, "Jesus instructed us not only to teach content, but to train people into obedient action."<sup>40</sup> This includes the task of making disciples and gathering them into new churches. So, the Great Commission was designed to be self-perpetuating: disciples of Christ making disciples who in turn make disciples. Carson warns, "Christianity must spread by an internal necessity or it has already decayed; for one of Jesus's commands is to teach all he commands. Failure to disciple, baptize, and teach the peoples of the world is already itself one of the failures of our own discipleship."<sup>41</sup>

### **The Presence of Christ (28:20)**

Christ's call to be and make genuine disciples is tough, but it is fueled by his presence. Morris emphasizes,

He does not say: "I will be with you," but "*I am with you*," and his *I* is emphatic, "no less than I" . . . . In other words the disciple is not going to be left to serve God as well as he can in the light of what he has learned from the things Jesus has commanded. The disciple will find that he has a great companion as he goes on his way through life.<sup>42</sup>

This assurance from Jesus calls to mind God's promises to "saints of old like Moses (Exod. 3:12) and Joshua (Josh. 1:5)."<sup>43</sup> Weber encourages the church, saying, "We will

---

<sup>39</sup> Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 749.

<sup>40</sup> Weber, *Matthew*, 486.

<sup>41</sup> Carson, *Matthew*, 599.

<sup>42</sup> Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 749.

<sup>43</sup> Weber, *Matthew*, 486.



become true disciples of the Messiah, effectively reproducing other disciples, if we abide with him and live out what we learn from him.”<sup>44</sup>

### **Ephesians 4:11-16**

Ephesians 4:11-16 teaches that God has appointed church leaders to equip church members “for the work of ministry.” This “work of ministry” entails making disciples of Jesus so that his church may attain maturity in Christ.

#### **The Gifts to the Church (4:11)**

Paul describes five gifts from Christ to his church, namely, the five offices of apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers. Arthur Skevington Wood describes each:

“Apostles” and “prophets” have already been paired as providing a foundation for the Christian temple (Eph. 2:20; 3:6). “Evangelists” are not primarily Gospel compilers but missionaries who pioneer outreach in areas where the faith has not as yet been proclaimed . . . . “Pastors and teachers” are grouped together in such a way as to suggest that the two roles are regarded as complimentary and often coordinated in the same person . . . . [T]hey were entrusted with the nurture, protection, and supervision of the flock.<sup>45</sup>

John Stott agrees with Wood that the offices of apostles and prophets are no longer operative today. He notes, “Although there are neither apostles nor prophets in the original sense today, there are evangelists to preach the gospel, pastors to tend the flock, and teachers to expound the word.”<sup>46</sup> He expresses his opinion that it is teachers who are urgently needed most: “It is teaching which builds up the church.”<sup>47</sup> F. F. Bruce suggests that the last two offices mentioned, “pastors and teachers,” are indeed synonymous. He

---

<sup>44</sup> Weber, *Matthew*, 483.

<sup>45</sup> Arthur Skevington Wood, *Ephesians*, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, *Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1,2 Thessalonians, 1,2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 58.

<sup>46</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, *The Bible Speaks Today* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1979), 164.

<sup>47</sup> Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 164.

writes, “Teaching is an essential part of the pastoral ministry; it is appropriate, therefore, that the two terms, ‘pastors and teachers,’ should be joined together to denote one order of ministry.”<sup>48</sup> Andrew Lincoln points out that the noun “pastor, shepherd” is used of Jesus Christ in John 10:11, 14; Hebrews 13:20; and 1 Peter 2:25, but that “it is employed for church leaders only here in the NT . . . . It suggests the exercise of leadership through nurture, care, and guidance.”<sup>49</sup>

### **The Ministry Purpose of Church Offices (4:12)**

So what are the purposes of these church offices? To perform the work of ministry as paid specialists? To dominate clerically over their congregants as spiritual authorities? Paul tells us exactly why Christ gave the church these “gifts” in verse 12: “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith” (Eph 4:12-13a). Bruce explains that syntactically, “the second and third phrases are dependent on the first, as is indicated by their being introduced by a different preposition from the first.”<sup>50</sup> Therefore, “these various forms of ministry were given to the people of God to equip them for the diversity of service which they were to render in the community, so that the community as a whole—‘the body of Christ’—would be built up.”<sup>51</sup>

Stott heartily agrees. He explains that the word translated “ministry” here describes the work not of ordained pastors, but that of “so-called laity, that is, all of God’s people without exception. Here is incontrovertible evidence that the New Testament envisages ministry not as the prerogative of a clerical elite but as the

---

<sup>48</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 159.

<sup>49</sup> Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 250-51.

<sup>50</sup> Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 159.

<sup>51</sup> Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 159.

privileged calling of all the people of God.”<sup>52</sup> The New Testament does not have the model in mind of a single pastor paid by a spiritually lazy congregation to do ministry for them. Rather, Paul is describing here a church marked by “an every-member ministry.”<sup>53</sup>

Stott summarizes verse 12:

So Christ’s immediate purpose in the giving of pastors and teachers to his church is through their ministry of the word to equip all his people for their varied ministries. And the ultimate purpose of this is to build up his body, the church. For clearly the way the whole body grows is for all its members to use their God-given gifts. These gifts are so beneficial both to those who exercise their ministry faithfully and to those who receive it that the church becomes steadily more healthy and mature.<sup>54</sup>

In short, today God has given the church evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of making disciples of Jesus so that his church may attain maturity in Christ.

### **The End Goal of Discipleship (4:13-16)**

Paul describes the end goal of Christian discipleship as a mature, unified faith in Christ, able to stand strong against false doctrine (Eph 4:13-14). He continues, “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love” (Eph 4:15-16). Stott clarifies, “The apostles intention is not to teach us how the human body works, but rather how the body of Christ grows . . . . It grows by truth and love.”<sup>55</sup> He wisely reflects, “Truth becomes hard if it is not softened by love; love becomes soft if it is not strengthened by truth.”<sup>56</sup> Bruce agrees, saying, “The

---

<sup>52</sup> Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 166-67.

<sup>53</sup> Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 167.

<sup>54</sup> Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 167.

<sup>55</sup> Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 171.

<sup>56</sup> Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 172.

confession of the Christian faith can be cold and indeed unattractive if it is not accompanied by the spirit of Christian love.”<sup>57</sup>

Lincoln perfectly summarizes the meaning of this text: “So Christ’s giving of gifts to the Church is to enable the Church to move toward its goals, and that movement is seen in terms of believers’ growth toward Christ.”<sup>58</sup>

## **2 Timothy 2:1-3**

Second Timothy 2:1-3 exhorts disciples of Jesus to make disciples who will, in turn, make more disciples of Jesus. Disciple-makers should expect to share in and endure suffering as they follow this model of generational discipleship.

### **Be Strengthened by Grace in Christ (2:1)**

Paul directly addresses his younger disciple in verse 1: “You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” There is sense of affection, but also one of accountability, in the term “my child.” Paul is in a Roman prison, nearing his execution, and expresses his longing to see Timothy again several places in this short epistle (1:3-4; 4:9). Philip Towner thinks it possible “that a real situation of stress and perhaps some wavering on the part of Timothy underlie the whole web of commands in the letter.”<sup>59</sup>

Being separated from his spiritual mentor and likely facing persecution himself for his association with Paul, was Timothy considering disassociating himself from his mentor and quitting his ministry? He needed strength and resolve to persevere. Stott comments that this “is not a summons to Timothy to be strong in himself—to set his jaw and grit his teeth—but to ‘be inwardly strengthened’ by means of ‘the grace that is in

---

<sup>57</sup> Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 160.

<sup>58</sup> Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 261.

<sup>59</sup> Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 264.

Christ Jesus.”<sup>60</sup> Stott adds, “It is not only for salvation that we are dependent on grace (1:9), but for service also.”<sup>61</sup>

### **Make Disciples Who Will Make Disciples (2:2)**

Paul seemed assured in his soul that Timothy would endure in faith and continue the mission. So he instructed his beloved disciple, “And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2).

Ralph Earle notes that “Paul was preparing for his last long journey, and he was depositing his gospel (a body of truth) with Timothy.”<sup>62</sup> But Timothy was not instructed to simply guard this “deposit of truth”; he was to pass it on! Stott remarks, “The aorist tense would seem to refer not to a single public occasion on which Timothy heard the apostle’s teaching—such as his baptism or ordination—but rather to the totality of his instruction over the years.”<sup>63</sup> Stott continues,

And the reference to the many witnesses shows that the apostolic faith was not a secret tradition handed on privately to Timothy (such as the Gnostics were claiming), whose authenticity there was no means of testing, but a public instruction, whose truth was guaranteed by the many witnesses who had heard it and who could therefore check Timothy’s teaching against the apostle’s.<sup>64</sup>

Paul instructed Timothy to “entrust” his gospel to “faithful men.” As Towner notes, “‘Entrusting’ the gospel was not simply a matter of a tap on the shoulder; it would

---

<sup>60</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Message of 2 Timothy*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1973), 49.

<sup>61</sup> Stott, *The Message of 2 Timothy*, 50.

<sup>62</sup> Ralph Earle, *2 Timothy*, in Gaebelien, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, *Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1,2 Thessalonians, 1,2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 397.

<sup>63</sup> Stott, *The Message of 2 Timothy*, 50.

<sup>64</sup> Stott, *The Message of 2 Timothy*, 50-51.

require Timothy to teach and to model the faith (1:11-12; 3:10-17).”<sup>65</sup> Modeling would not merely entail preaching or working through a curriculum, as it were. As Paul spent relational time with Timothy, so too must he engage other “faithful men” to disciple them toward Christlike obedience. Timothy would need to carefully select men of faithful character (1 Tim 3:1-7) and competence such that they would be able to guard and faithfully pass on the apostle’s gospel.

Second Timothy 2:2 provides a model for generational discipleship. Paul received the gospel from Christ, and he carefully passed it on to Timothy—through word and example—as they lived together, ministered together, traveled together, suffered together, adventured together, and experienced God’s deliverance and grace together. As Paul faces his death, he instructs his “number 1” disciple to follow his example, and to faithfully disciple others, who will in turn faithfully disciple others. Stott calls this “a transmission of the apostle’s doctrine handed down unchanged from the apostles to subsequent generations, and passed from hand to hand like the Olympic torch.”<sup>66</sup>

### **Share in Suffering as a Good Soldier of Christ (2:3)**

Making disciples is hard; in fact, suffering is often part of the process. For many places in the world—Afghanistan, Iran, China, North Africa—significant, measurable suffering is a normal part of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. Jesus said that his disciples are not greater than their Master; suffering is part of what it means to follow him (Matt 5:10-12; 10:16-25). Christians often think of suffering in terms of rejection, banishment, loss of income, torture, and death, but ridicule is included as a legitimate category of suffering, according to Jesus (Matt 5:10-12).

---

<sup>65</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 265.

<sup>66</sup> Stott, *The Message of 2 Timothy*, 52.

Paul therefore instructs Timothy, “Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 2:3). This is not the only place where Paul compares the metaphor of a soldier with the faithful Christian (2 Cor 10:3-5; Eph 6:10; 1 Tim 1:18; 6:12). In short, bad soldiers avoid suffering; good soldiers endure it. As Towner puts it, “This repetition of the call expands on suffering as a requirement of faithful service.”<sup>67</sup> Faithful disciple-making, even in Niceville, Florida, will include suffering.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, an exegesis of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 demonstrated that the foundation for making disciples of Christ must be a passionate love for God. Psalm 96:1-10 proclaimed that a passion for God’s glory should compel Christians to declare his glory to all the nations, including their own. Matthew 28:18-20, known by Christians as “The Great Commission,” recorded Jesus’s final command to his disciples to make disciples of all nations with his delegated authority. Ephesians 4:11-16 taught that God has appointed church leaders for the purpose of equipping church members to make disciples of Jesus so that his church may attain maturity in Christ. Second Timothy 2:1-3 exhorted disciples of Jesus to make disciples who will, in turn, make more disciples—even if it entails suffering.

Having established the biblical basis for making disciples, the next chapter will explore Christian literature demonstrating practically how equipping disciple-makers at RBBC will require church members to come to be motivated by the glory of God, to believe that God has called them to make disciples, to commit to intentional discipleship relationships, and to be willing to suffer rejection in doing so.

---

<sup>67</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 265.

CHAPTER 3  
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR  
EQUIPPING DISCIPLE-MAKERS AT ROCKY  
BAYOU BAPTIST CHURCH IN  
NICEVILLE, FLORIDA

This chapter surveys Christian literature demonstrating how raising up and equipping disciple-makers at Rocky Bayou Baptist Church will require church members to be motivated by the glory of God and to believe that he has called each of them to evangelize and make disciples of Christ. It argues that authentic discipleship will best happen beyond the church walls as each member of RBBC commits to intentionally seek out and build personal discipleship<sup>1</sup> relationships in which they purpose to mature in Christ together in a society that is becoming increasingly hostile to biblical Christianity. Therefore, committed disciple-makers must be willing to suffer rejection and possibly worse.

**Motivated by Glory**

Being awestruck by God’s glory is the most powerful motivator for discipleship. John Piper began his famous book on missions with the following statement:

Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man . . . . Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal in missions. It’s the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white-hot enjoyment of God’s glory.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Bobby Jamieson helpfully defines discipleship as the process of “growing as followers of Jesus and helping others to do the same.” Bobby Jamieson, *Growing One Another: Discipleship in the Church*, Healthy Church Study Guides (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 19.

<sup>2</sup> John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 11.



All humans are incurable worshippers of things extraordinary, but Christians recognize and ascribe worth to God. Because they have experienced and recognized God's glory, true Christians not only want to worship their God but also want to bring other people into the enjoyment of worshipping their God. Christians who have truly been overwhelmed by God's glory want to make disciples among all peoples, including those who live in their own nation and community.

If we are to be motivated by God's glory, we should understand what we mean by the term. What exactly is the glory of God? This term is often used by Christians in a vague sense with too little clarity to motivate a change in actual daily behavior. Wayne Grudem explains that in one sense the word means "honor" or "excellent reputation," such as in Romans 3:23, which says that all people "have sinned and fall short of the *glory* of God."<sup>3</sup> But there is another sense of the word that refers to the brilliant light that radiates from God. Hebrews 1:3 says that Jesus "is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature." Regarding this sense of the word, Grudem explains, "Quite amazingly, God made us to reflect his glory . . . . Though we do not now find ourselves surrounded by a visible light, there is a brightness, a splendor, or a beauty about the manner of life of a person who deeply loves God, and it is often evident to those around such a person."<sup>4</sup>

A true and strong focus on God's glory leads to a life marked by evangelism and discipleship. The world, our sinful flesh, and the devil all want to distract and discourage Christians from following Christ's command to make disciples.<sup>5</sup> Altruistic but man-centered motivation will not bring the endurance needed for discipleship when

---

<sup>3</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 220.

<sup>4</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 221.

<sup>5</sup> This project simply defines disciples as "followers of Jesus Christ." This definition comes from Trent C. Butler, ed., *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Holman Bible, 1991), 362.

people reject, disappoint, or even persecute Christians for their efforts to point them to Jesus, but the joy of pleasing and obeying God is a powerful motivator for enduring discipleship. Will Metzger writes, “The doorway into a hopeful and joyful witness is found by focusing on God as Creator and Redeemer.”<sup>6</sup>

The process of discipleship transforms new followers of Jesus from self-glorifying individuals into people who are fixated on the glory of Christ. Bill Hull claims, “The whole point of the gospel is to be transformed into the image of Christ.”<sup>7</sup> He elaborates, “When transformation begins in the mind, the goal is the mind of Christ. That means we want to acquire the ideas of Christ and the images of Christ, and we want to feel what Jesus feels.”<sup>8</sup>

Christian discipleship entails a genuine relationship with God and the personal enjoyment of his glory. As Piper puts it, “*God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.* This is perhaps the most important sentence in my theology.”<sup>9</sup> True Christian discipleship flows from a relationship with God. It longs to bring others into this genuine and passionate relationship with him so that they too may enjoy his glory and glorify him with the worship of their lives. Following Jesus transforms people into disciples who are passionate about knowing God and making him known to other people in their community and world.

### **Discipleship as Calling**

Fully understanding that God has called every Christian to make disciples should transform church members’ hearts from consumerism to commitment to the

---

<sup>6</sup> Will Metzger, *Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 18.

<sup>7</sup> Bill Hull, *Choose the Life: Exploring a Faith That Embraces Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 24.

<sup>8</sup> Hull, *Choose the Life*, 122.

<sup>9</sup> Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad!*, 26.

ministry of evangelism and discipleship. David Platt argues that many American churches are largely defined more by consumerism than by discipleship.<sup>10</sup> Churches spend vast sums of money, time, and energy on attractions and programs designed to bring people into the doors of their churches<sup>11</sup> rather than training disciples of Jesus to go out into a lost and hurting society with the gospel of Christ.

Comparing his first Sunday at an American megachurch with his experience visiting persecuted underground churches in Asia, Platt writes, “I could not help but think that somewhere along the way we had missed what is radical about our faith and replaced it with what is comfortable. We were settling for a Christianity that revolves around catering to ourselves when the central message of Christianity is actually about abandoning ourselves.”<sup>12</sup> Platt further explains,

We are giving in to the dangerous temptation to take the Jesus of the Bible and twist him into a version of Jesus we are more comfortable with. A nice, middle-class, American Jesus. A Jesus who doesn't mind materialism and who would never call us to give away everything we have . . . . A Jesus who brings us comfort and prosperity as we live out our Christian spin on the American dream.<sup>13</sup>

James Montgomery Boice warns, “There is a fatal defect in the life of Christ's church in the twentieth century: a lack of true discipleship. Discipleship means forsaking everything to follow Christ.”<sup>14</sup> He reasons that this defect comes from a faulty understanding of Christianity itself. He challenges the false bifurcation in much of American Christianity between having Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior and Lord.

---

<sup>10</sup> David Platt makes this point in his book *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> Rick Warren, for example, acknowledges that he designed Saddleback's Sunday morning services not for the purpose of Christians gathering to worship God but around the goal of attracting non-Christians and preaching to their felt needs as a means of evangelism. Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 245-46.

<sup>12</sup> Platt, *Radical*, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Platt, *Radical*, 13.

<sup>14</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Christ's Call to Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 13.

He argues, “Discipleship is not a supposed second step in Christianity, as if one first becomes a believer in Jesus and then, if he chooses, a disciple. From the beginning, discipleship is involved in what it means to be a Christian.”<sup>15</sup>

Bill Hull agrees that true Christians are—by definition—disciples of Jesus, claiming, “A faith that separates salvation from discipleship is not the faith of the New Testament. Faith without obedience is not real; it is nothing more than an intellectual exercise. The faith taught to us by Jesus embraces a lifelong abandonment of following Jesus whatever the cost or destination.”<sup>16</sup> He quotes Bonhoeffer: “‘Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.’ Enough of the church has accepted a non-discipleship Christianity to render it ineffective at its primary task—the transformation of individuals and communities into the image of Christ.”<sup>17</sup>

This consumer mindset is not limited to “seeker-centered” churches with their priority on entertainment and a weekly programed sixty-minute “spiritual experience” absent of discipleship. Reformed churches like RBBC may fall into the same trap of consumerism by providing its members a buffet of “deep” Bible teaching with little expectation or accountability to obey all that Christ has commanded them. As Hull laments, “We have made the test for salvation doctrinal rather than behavioral.”<sup>18</sup>

One indicator of consumerism versus discipleship in the American church is the reticence of American Christians to share the gospel. Mark Dever laments, “Christians often leave evangelism to ‘the professionals’ out of a sense of inadequacy, apathy, ignorance, fear, or simply feeling that it is inappropriate for them to do it. Perhaps they’re not sure of what evangelism entails and how it should be done. This situation is

---

<sup>15</sup> Boice, *Christ’s Call to Discipleship*, 16.

<sup>16</sup> Hull, *Choose the Life*, 10.

<sup>17</sup> Hull, *Choose the Life*, 11.

<sup>18</sup> Hull, *Choose the Life*, 23.

tragic.”<sup>19</sup> Mack Stiles notes that many well-churched and theologically taught American Christians are not able to present the gospel. He warns, “If you do not know how to teach the gospel, you may not truly understand it. And if you do not understand it, you may not be a true Christian.”<sup>20</sup>

Michael Wilder and Timothy Paul Jones make the point that it is not only American pew-sitters who struggle to share the gospel in their daily lives. Pastors also struggle with evangelism. Wilder and Jones observe, “Too often pastors limit their witness to corporate settings and fail to share the gospel with individuals. Consider the number of churches that have not seen one convert in the last year. What an indictment against the shepherds if they are not actively sharing the gospel!”<sup>21</sup>

A temptation for American pastors is to evaluate ministry success by attendance records and giving numbers. But are their churches filled with disciples of Jesus who obey his command to make disciples? What is the mark of God’s blessing on our churches? Boice argues that money, power, and success do not lead to happiness. But when Christians reject consumerism, “We are driven to the fellowship of God. It is only at the cross that the gulf between a holy God and sinful man is bridged, sin is removed, and a wide channel for the fullness of God’s blessing is unclogged.”<sup>22</sup>

True joy comes from following Christ, and he has clearly called his church to the ministry of evangelism and discipleship. John MacArthur, who famously argues in his book *The Gospel According to Jesus* that if a person has truly put their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, he or she is also following Christ as Lord, writes, “Every Christian is a disciple. In fact, the Lord’s Great Commission was to go into all the world and ‘make

---

<sup>19</sup> Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 128.

<sup>20</sup> J. Mack Stiles, *Evangelism: How the Whole Church Speaks of Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 30-31.

<sup>21</sup> Michael S. Wilder and Timothy Paul Jones, *The God Who Goes before You: Pastoral Leadership as Christ-Centered Followership* (Nashville: B&H, 2018), 181.

<sup>22</sup> Boice, *Christ’s Call to Discipleship*, 147.

disciples . . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you' (Matt. 28:19-20). That means that the mission of the church and the goal of evangelism is to make disciples."<sup>23</sup>

Dever clarifies that the Great Commission applies to every true follower of Jesus, writing, "This statement, commonly called the Great Commission, is a commission for *all* of Jesus's disciples—those who hear his words directly, and we who read his words today. Why else would Jesus offer assurance of his presence to the very end of the age—long after the original disciples would have died?"<sup>24</sup> Stiles agrees, asking, "Have you ever heard someone say, 'Evangelism is not my gift,' as if that excused him from sharing his faith? That's a kindergarten understanding of evangelism. All Christians are called to share their faith as a point of faithfulness, not gifting (Matt. 28:19)."<sup>25</sup>

In his classic work *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, J. I. Packer argues that a high view of God and his sovereignty will result in faithfulness to his command to evangelize. Packer writes, "We are not all called to be preachers; we are not all given equal opportunities or comparable abilities for personal dealing with men and women who need Christ. But we all have some evangelistic responsibility which we cannot shirk without failing in love both to God and to our neighbor."<sup>26</sup> He summarizes the scope and the message we have been given:

Evangelism, we have learned, is a task appointed to all God's people everywhere. It is the task of communicating a message from the Creator to rebel mankind. The message begins with information and ends with invitation. The information concerns God's work of making His Son a perfect Saviour for sinners. The

---

<sup>23</sup> John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 221.

<sup>24</sup> Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, 137.

<sup>25</sup> Stiles, *Evangelism*, 54.

<sup>26</sup> J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 78.

invitation is God's summons to mankind generally to come to the Saviour and find life.<sup>27</sup>

Dever evaluates the Christian's motivation for evangelism, writing, "What is the *right* reason to tell the good news? According to the Bible, good motives for evangelism include a desire to be obedient to the Great Commission (see Matt. 28:28-29; 1 Cor. 9:16-17); a love for the lost (e.g., Matt. 9:36; John 3:16; Rom.10:1); and preeminently, a love for God."<sup>28</sup> He concludes that while evangelism is challenging, it should become joyful for the Christian: "When you understand that evangelism isn't converting people, but that it is telling them the wonderful truth about God, the great news about Jesus Christ, then obedience to the call to evangelize can become certain and joyful."<sup>29</sup>

Stiles discusses building a culture of evangelism in our local churches, reflecting, "To be compelled by love to share the gospel individually is a beautiful thing, but when it happens in community, it's joyfully glorious. The need to badger people to share their faith evaporates. It becomes something we long to do. It becomes a way of thinking."<sup>30</sup> He continues, "I long for a church that understands that it—the local church—is the chosen and best method of evangelism . . . . I long for a church where the greatest celebrations happen over those who share their faith, and the heroes are those who risk their reputations to evangelize."<sup>31</sup>

Successful evangelism should lead to continued discipleship of new believers. Both require time, effort, and sacrifice. Platt reminds us that following Jesus was not intended to be easy for Jesus's first disciples or for those who follow him today,

---

<sup>27</sup> Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, 92.

<sup>28</sup> Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, 139.

<sup>29</sup> Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, 136.

<sup>30</sup> Stiles, *Evangelism*, 48.

<sup>31</sup> Stiles, *Evangelism*, 61.

claiming, “He was calling them to abandon their careers. They were reorienting their entire life’s work around discipleship to Jesus. Their plans and dreams were now being swallowed up in his.”<sup>32</sup>

True followers of Christ will be passionate about his passion for discipleship. A desire for God’s glory, combined with a clear understanding of Christ’s call to discipleship, should transform church member’s hearts to a commitment to the ministry of evangelism and discipleship. Robert Coleman explains,

Christian disciples are sent men and women—sent out in the same work of world evangelism to which the Lord was sent, and for which he gave his life. Evangelism is not an optional accessory to our life. It is the heartbeat of all that we are called to be and do. It is the commission of the church which gives meaning to all else that is undertaken in the name of Christ.<sup>33</sup>

Platt tells the story of an African brother in the bush who told him he was going to impact the world:

An interesting statement. Here was a guy in the African bush with almost no resources. A guy who hadn’t seen much of the world beyond the villages that surrounded him. A guy who by all outward appearances did not have much hope for changing his lot in life. “Bullen, how are you going to impact the world?” I asked. “I’m going to make disciples of all the nations,” he said. “So you are going to impact the world by making disciples of all nations?” That grin immediately spread across his face. “Why not?” he asked.<sup>34</sup>

Reflecting upon that encounter, Platt challenges all Christians, both in America and around the world, saying,

Regardless of what country we live in, what skills we possess, what kind of education we have, or what kind of salary we make, Jesus has commanded each of us to make disciples, and *this is the means* by which we will impact the world. Indeed, Jesus has invited us to join with him in the surprisingly simple journey of spreading the gospel to all nations by spending our lives for the good of others and the glory of God.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Platt, *Radical*, 12.

<sup>33</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism and Discipleship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), 88.

<sup>34</sup> Platt, *Radical*, 86.

<sup>35</sup> Platt, *Radical*, 87.



Jesus has called all of his disciples—whether they be African or American—to make disciples. Clearly understanding this should move hearts from consumerism to commitment to this world and community-changing task.

### **Spiritual Maturity**

Committing to authentic, personal discipleship relationships will enable church members to effectively share the gospel of Jesus Christ with their lost neighbors and to disciple them “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:13).

Commenting on Christ’s calling of his disciples in Luke 6:13, Coleman writes, “It all started by Jesus calling a few men to follow him . . . . Men were to be his method of winning the world to God.”<sup>36</sup> Coleman compares Jesus’s example to that of many modern American churches, who would likely take a more programmatic approach, seeking to draw large crowds of people through splashy, attractional services. He continues, “Though he did what he could to help the multitudes, he had to devote himself primarily to a few men, rather than the masses, so that the masses could at last be saved. This was the genius of his strategy.”<sup>37</sup>

Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck point out that in Luke 12:41, we actually see Peter trying to help Jesus out by redirecting his attention from his small band of disciples to the crowd: “Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?” Peter looked at it the way most of us American Christians would: why ignore the crowds to focus on teaching a few people? Geiger and Peck write, “Most would think that the reasonable approach would be to address the majority of the people, but because discipleship is his method, Jesus’s approach was upside-down. He focused on his disciples. The crowd was his secondary

---

<sup>36</sup> Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism and Discipleship*, 27.

<sup>37</sup> Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism and Discipleship*, 36.

audience.”<sup>38</sup> While Jesus did teach and heal the crowds, he prioritized mentoring his disciples, for it was his plan that they—and the disciples they would make—would change the world (John 14:12).

Leroy Eims explains that the greatest testament to the power of discipleship lies in the change that we see in these eleven men. He writes, “The effect this ministry of making disciples by association has on the men in training is powerful, dramatic, and life changing. It is almost unbelievable to see the transformation that took place in the lives of the twelve apostles. It is one of the most spectacular miracles in Scripture.”<sup>39</sup>

Christ’s example of focusing his energy on mentoring a small number of disciples is the paramount example of discipleship in the Scriptures, but not the only one. Elijah mentored Elisha, Moses mentored Joshua, and Paul mentored Titus and Timothy, to whom he wrote, “and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2). We know that he disciplined others, for he wrote to the Philippian church, “Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put into practice” (Phil 4:9).

How many people should we seek to disciple at once? Eims makes the point that we should not disciple too many people at once, for “to train men a person must be willing to spend time with those men in hours of conversation and association in the normal affairs of life. That is one reason why you cannot take on too many men at once. You can spread yourself too thin and never get any quality time with any of them.”<sup>40</sup> We read in the Old Testament that Moses and Elijah disciplined one man at a time, “one-on-

---

<sup>38</sup> Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development* (Nashville: B&H, 2016), 166.

<sup>39</sup> Leroy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 33.

<sup>40</sup> Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*, 31.

one.” Metzger claims, “a one-to-one approach initiated by every believer still holds the best promise of evangelizing the earth in our century.”<sup>41</sup>

Greg Ogden agrees that discipleship is optimal with a small group, but explains that his research indicates a small group size of three (“*triads*”) or four (“*quads*”) is more optimal than one-on-one discipleship relationships.<sup>42</sup> He explains that they allow for a “group process” rather than “a teacher-student dynamic,” that “micro groups shift the model from hierarchical to relational,” that there was a greater presence of the Holy Spirit with a few meeting together over two people, and that the micro group gathering increases wisdom.<sup>43</sup>

What is clearly important is that Christians commit to building intimate personal relationships with neighbors and friends that will lead to authentic discipleship. Bobby Jamieson claims, “One of the chief means by which we grow as disciples is through personal relationships in which we bring the truths of the gospel to bear on the details of life.”<sup>44</sup> Eims agrees, writing, “Two prime means of developing a worker for the cause of Christ, one who will be a maker of disciples and an effective and productive member of your disciple-making team, are transmission by example and spending “man-to-man,” personal time with him.”<sup>45</sup>

American Christians tend to think of discipleship as going through a training curriculum during a set time, but Coleman explains how “having called his men, Jesus made a practice of being with them. This was the essence of his training program—just

---

<sup>41</sup> Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 17.

<sup>42</sup> RBBC currently has about a dozen “quads” meeting for discipleship during the course of each week; this ministry is led and organized by lay church members and is growing in scope and influence.

<sup>43</sup> Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018), xiii.

<sup>44</sup> Jamieson, *Growing One Another*, 31.

<sup>45</sup> Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*, 98.

letting his disciples follow him.”<sup>46</sup> Jesus’s approach was more organic: “Knowledge was gained by association before it was understood by explanation . . . . One living sermon is worth a hundred explanations.”<sup>47</sup> Gary Bredfeldt agrees, applying this discipleship principle modeled by Jesus to the Christian leader: “You see, in the final analysis, Christian leaders lead first through the example of their lives and then through their teaching.”<sup>48</sup> This is not to say that reading a book or working through a curriculum together is not a helpful means for facilitating discipleship, but it is not a substitute for walking together in an authentic relationship of increasing transparency and discussing together how God’s Word applies to the joys, hardships, and challenges of daily life.<sup>49</sup>

In his book *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus*, Dever writes, “At the heart of Christianity is God’s desire for a people to display his character. They do this through their obedience to his Word in their relationships with him and with each other.”<sup>50</sup> Commenting on the responsibility of the Great Commission, Dever continues, “The lives of these people, in other words, should be dedicated to helping others follow Jesus . . . . That’s the working definition of *discipling* for this book: helping others to follow Jesus.”<sup>51</sup> Dever later elaborates on the relational aspect of discipleship: “To add another angle, discipling is a form of mutual love. There is something of a teacher-

---

<sup>46</sup> Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism and Discipleship*, 41.

<sup>47</sup> Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism and Discipleship*, 41.

<sup>48</sup> Gary J. Bredfeldt, *Great Leader, Great Teacher: Recovering the Biblical Vision for Leadership* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006), 39.

<sup>49</sup> The disciple-maker should be a careful student of the Bible and the life he or she seeks to influence towards following Christ, seeking to bring the two together. John Stott agrees with this principle, teaching the pastor that in sermon preparation he must “take seriously both the biblical text and the contemporary scene.” He continues, “To withdraw from the world into the Bible (which is escapism), or from the Bible into the world (which is conformity) will be fatal to our preaching ministry.” He claims we must be students of both, for our goal must be to “speak the divine Word to the human situation” with both “sensitivity and accuracy.” John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 180.

<sup>50</sup> Mark Dever, *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 12.

<sup>51</sup> Dever, *Discipling*, 13.

student relationship. But there will also be peer-to-peer mutuality and love, such that the discipling often goes both ways.”<sup>52</sup>

Since discipleship must happen not in a vacuum, but in the course of living life together,<sup>53</sup> it must include intentional and even sacrificial hospitality. Metzger writes, “We should open up our homes as well as our hearts to others. To invite people to be part of our lives and/or families is an important demonstration of the gospel in action.”<sup>54</sup> Eims challenges American Christians to look outside our social circles when embarking upon discipleship relationships:

In our making disciples, we should not select only those who are like us in temperament and personality. Nor should we choose only those who act in a certain way that we find agreeable to our personal lives and acceptance standards . . . . In selecting men and women, you’ll have to abandon your proneness to conformity and follow the example of Jesus.<sup>55</sup>

His band of disciples were indeed a diverse lot.

Personal discipleship is not a clean, simple task, accomplished through a set program or timescale. Platt explains,

Making disciples is not an easy process. It is trying. It is messy. It is slow, tedious, even painful at times. It is all these things because it is relational. Jesus has not given us an effortless, step-by-step formula for impacting nations for his glory. He has given us people, and he has said, “Live for them. Love them, serve them, and lead them. Lead them to follow me, and lead them to lead others to follow me. In the process you will multiply the gospel to the ends of the earth.”<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> Dever, *Discipling*, 40.

<sup>53</sup> Bill Hull agrees, writing, “Believers cannot share life together unless they *are* together on a regular basis. In a mobile, rootless, “cut flower” society such as ours, Christian contact becomes critical.” Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Church* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1990), 65.

<sup>54</sup> Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 157.

<sup>55</sup> Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*, 30.

<sup>56</sup> Platt, *Radical*, 93.

Platt continues, “Disciple making is not about a program or an event but about a relationship. As we share the gospel, we impart life, and this is the essence of making disciples. Sharing the life of Christ.”<sup>57</sup>

Platt discusses how in order to make disciples of Christ, we must first be disciples of Christ. In fact, Christ designed the process of disciple-making to help not only the person being disciplined grow in Christ, but for the disciple-maker to grow in Christ. He elaborates,

In order to teach someone else how to pray, we need to know how to pray. In order to help someone else learn how to study the Bible, we need to be active in studying the Bible. But this is the beauty of making disciples. When we take responsibility for helping others grow in Christ, it automatically takes our own relationship with Christ to a new level.<sup>58</sup>

This includes what Platt calls “listening to reproduce.” Discipleship will reduce mind-drifting and sleeping in church! Platt writes, “When we realize we have the responsibility to teach the Word, it changes everything about how we hear the Word.”<sup>59</sup>

Discipleship begins with a clear understanding of the gospel. It is vital for every member of RBBC to be able to clearly articulate the gospel to their lost neighbors and friends. In *What Is the Gospel?*, Greg Gilbert summarizes the gospel, writing, “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>60</sup>

Discipleship should begin with a clear understanding of the gospel, but its end should be to bring followers of Jesus “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:13). Discipleship entails gospel focus, personal relationships, and a strong

---

<sup>57</sup> Platt, *Radical*, 96.

<sup>58</sup> Platt, *Radical*, 101.

<sup>59</sup> Platt, *Radical*, 102.

<sup>60</sup> Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Gospel?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 36.

commitment to studying and applying together the Word of God. Biblical discipleship is a high ambition, but Jesus gave us nothing less with his final command, “teaching them to obey everything I commanded you” (Matt 28:20).

When is the process of discipleship of another Christian complete? According to 2 Timothy 2:2, the goal is for followers of Jesus to make disciples who will make disciples. Coleman instructs, “Here finally is where we must all evaluate the contribution that our life and witness is making to the supreme purpose of him who is the Savior of the world. Are those who have followed us to Christ now leading others to him and teaching them to make disciples like ourselves?”<sup>61</sup>

Thankfully, Christians are not called to make disciples alone. Dever discusses the need to establish a culture of discipleship within the church, writing, “growth as a Christian is not just the responsibility of the individual. And it is not only mine as the pastor. Members of the church are to teach each other. That’s part of what knits us together as the body of Christ.”<sup>62</sup>

### **Suffering Discipleship**

Following Christ in suffering will empower church members to persevere in obedience to Christ’s call to make disciples when they face rejection. Members of RBBC should understand that an increased commitment to discipleship will entail increased spiritual warfare and suffering.<sup>63</sup> Paul wrote, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this

---

<sup>61</sup> Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism and Discipleship*, 102.

<sup>62</sup> Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, 224.

<sup>63</sup> While the scope of the remainder this chapter deals with suffering rejection and hardship from non-Christians because of discipleship efforts, it is possible that disciple-makers will suffer criticism from within the church for their efforts. Paul Tripp agrees, writing, “If you have given yourself to building people, you have accepted the call to suffer for the sake of the gospel . . . . Not only is the church filled with unfinished people with sin resident inside them in the midst of ongoing spiritual war; your leadership community is filled with the same.” Paul Tripp, *Lead: 12 Gospel Principles for Leadership in the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 53.

present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph 6:12). Peter warned, “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world” (1 Pet 5:8-9). Indeed, the more Christians follow Christ on the road of discipleship, the more they should expect push-back from the enemy.

Paul rejoiced from prison in Philippians 1:12-13 that his imprisonment had “served to advance the gospel.” Commenting on this, Stiles writes, “Paul’s ministry was risky enough that he was thrown in jail . . . . Are we willing to call people to risky evangelism? I long for a culture of evangelism that is risky in the sense that we’re confronting culture. Mostly that means disregarding what people think of us.”<sup>64</sup> He continues, “I long for a church where neighboring atheists and non-Christians see fellow atheists and non-Christians coming to faith—an indication that we’re a part of a risk-taking culture of evangelism.”<sup>65</sup>

Stiles talks about his friend Farshid being arrested in Iran for being a faithful witness: “He’s being held in the notorious Evin Prison in Iran. When he is able to slip a letter out of jail, Farshid asks his friends to pray that he would be bold and clear with the gospel, and that he would continue rejoicing in Christ.”<sup>66</sup> Stiles admonishes us, “Take courage from Farshid’s story and be bold and clear with the gospel in your own setting. The Bible calls us to remember those who have been brave and faithful, and to follow their example.” Platt agrees, sharing the story of a Muslim background believer named Ayan who risks her life daily to make Jesus known to her own people in the Middle East.

---

<sup>64</sup> Stiles, *Evangelism*, 59.

<sup>65</sup> Stiles, *Evangelism*, 60.

<sup>66</sup> Stiles, *Evangelism*, 107.



He writes, “Ayan’s story is a clear reminder that the initial call to Christ is an inevitable call to die. Such a call has been clear since the beginning of Christianity.”<sup>67</sup>

While it is unlikely that American Christians will be currently martyred for sharing their faith in their own country, we should not minimize the reality of scorn as persecution. Being rejected hurts! Jesus said, “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matt 5:11-12).

American Christians may also suffer at work for their faith and witness. David Goetsch explains,

As a Christian in the workplace, your faith is going to be challenged. Count on it and do not be surprised or shocked when it happens. The devil is a predator who never stops hunting, and you, alike all Christians, are his prey. Further, the workplace is one of his favorite hunting grounds. When your faith is challenged and you find your resolve weakening, remember suffering for your beliefs in the short run is better than suffering in eternity for compromising them.<sup>68</sup>

Goetsch reminds Christians in the marketplace that 2 Timothy 3:12 actually promises persecution for “all who desire to live a Godly life in Christ Jesus.” He explains, “Persecution is just one more form of adversity you might face as a Christian in the workplace. When you suffer adversity at work, remember you are not the first Christian who has done so. Seek out fellow Christians who have suffered but persevered, learn from their experience, and grow from their wisdom.”<sup>69</sup> Disciple-making Christians may suffer more than just scorn for their Christian faithfulness in the marketplace; they may be passed over for promotions or even lose their employment.

---

<sup>67</sup> David Platt, *Follow Me: A Call to Die. A Call to Live* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2013), 2.

<sup>68</sup> David Goetsch, *Christians on the Job: Winning at Work without Compromising Your Faith* (Washington, DC: Salem Books, 2019), 4.

<sup>69</sup> Goetsch, *Christians on the Job*, 233.

Goetsch writes, “If you are being persecuted in the workplace for your Christianity, you are in good company. Never forget what Christ said about persecution of Christians in John 15:18-19. In these verses Christ made it clear His followers should expect to be persecuted. Those who hate Christ are bound to hate His followers.”<sup>70</sup>

Goetsch encourages the persecuted Christian: “*Run to God, not from Him*. Like any form of adversity faced by Christians, persecution can drive us to God or push us away from Him.”<sup>71</sup> Regarding his own experience, the apostle Paul wrote, “Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ” (Phil 3:8).

In his divine providence, God uses suffering for his purposes in the life of the disciple of Jesus. MacArthur argues that “suffering and persecution play an important dual role in the kingdom of God. First, such trials expose false believers, and second, they strengthen true believers.”<sup>72</sup> Piper takes God’s purposes in suffering a step further, arguing that the Christian’s suffering actually helps in the mission of making Christ known:

Christianity is not a life that one would embrace as abundant and satisfying without the hope of fellowship with Christ in the resurrection. And what we have seen is that this embracing of suffering is not just an accomplishment of our witness to Christ, it is the visible expression of it. Our sufferings make Christ’s sufferings known, so that people can see the kind of love Christ offers . . . . The startling implication of this is that the saving purposes of Christ among the nations and in our neighborhoods will not be accomplished unless Christians choose to suffer.<sup>73</sup>

Our Savior, Lord, and Hero Jesus himself suffered. He is not a leader who demands more from his followers than from himself. Indeed, he led us by supreme

---

<sup>70</sup> Goetsch, *Christians on the Job*, 245.

<sup>71</sup> Goetsch, *Christians on the Job*, 248.

<sup>72</sup> MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, 129.

<sup>73</sup> John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1996), 231.

example. In his book *The Man Christ Jesus: Theological Reflections on the Humanity of Christ*, Bruce Ware comments on Christ's *kenosis* described in Philippians 2:5-8, writing, "We see here the ultimate reason or purpose of the self-emptying of the eternal Son. He became also fully a man in order that he would be able to obey the Father in going to the cross, giving his life for others."<sup>74</sup> Ware emphasizes in his book that Jesus endured life as a human not through his own divine power but through dependence on the Holy Spirit. This means his suffering was real, and it is a real example that we can follow. Ware explains,

Jesus knew that his obedience to the Father and the Father's will would mean only continued and intensified suffering. Yet, despite the suffering he knew he would receive, he resisted the temptation to avoid suffering and to turn away from the Father's will and instead resolutely obeyed the Father every step of the way, no matter how hard things were.<sup>75</sup>

In his classic book *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer calls true disciples of Christ to joyfully follow their Master in suffering:

Jesus must therefore make it clear beyond all doubt that the "must" of suffering applies to his disciples no less than to himself. Just as Christ is Christ only in virtue of his suffering and rejection, so the disciple is a disciple only in so far as he shares his Lord's suffering and rejection and crucifixion. Discipleship means adherence to the person of Jesus, and therefore submission to the law of Christ which is the law of the cross.<sup>76</sup>

Bonhoeffer allows for no escape for the Christian on suffering. He concludes, "The cross is laid on every Christian . . . . When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."<sup>77</sup>

Catholic scholar Henri Nouwen reminds us of this truth by his life example. He left his academic post at Harvard to live with, serve, and learn from the mentally handicapped at L'Arche. He also reminds us of this truth with his written words: "The

---

<sup>74</sup> Bruce Ware, *The Man Christ Jesus: Theological Reflections on the Humanity of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 24.

<sup>75</sup> Ware, *The Man Christ Jesus*, 63.

<sup>76</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan, 1975), 96.

<sup>77</sup> Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 99.

way of the Christian leader is not the way of upward mobility in which our world has invested so much, but the way of downward mobility ending on the cross.”<sup>78</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed current Christian literature on the topic of discipleship. In summary, it established that raising up and equipping disciple-makers at RBBC will require church members to become passionate for the glory of God and to come to understand and believe that God has called each of them to share the gospel and make disciples in their own community. This will not entail “business as usual” Christianity but will involve intentionally building personal discipleship relationships centered on maturing in Christ through his Word together. Inherent in that commitment must be a willingness to follow Christ in suffering as a result of these evangelism and discipleship efforts.

The next chapter describes the details of my project to raise up and equip more disciple-makers at RBBC. As Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen” (Rom 11:36).

---

<sup>78</sup> Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* (New York: Crossroads, 1989), 81.

## CHAPTER 4

### DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT FOR EQUIPPING DISCIPLE-MAKERS AT ROCKY BAYOU BAPTIST CHURCH IN NICEVILLE, FLORIDA

The purpose of this project was to raise up and equip disciple-makers at Rocky Bayou Baptist Church. The goals of this project were to assess the current knowledge and practice of disciple-making among a group of twenty to thirty volunteer members of RBBC, to develop a ten-week discipleship training curriculum entitled “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker,” and to improve the knowledge and practice of disciple-making among the group by teaching a course that emphasized weekly implementation of the lessons learned. This project took place over a twenty-week time frame in three phases: preparation, implementation, and follow-up.

#### **Preparation for “Every Disciple a Disciple Maker” Course (Weeks 1-4)**

##### **Preparation for the Course**

The first four weeks of January 2023 entailed the preparation period, but planning really began back at our elder retreat in October 2022. As I laid out my thoughts for the project to the elders, we prayerfully decided to make our church’s theme for 2023: “Knowing Him + Making Him Known = Discipleship.” I would begin the year by preaching two sermons emphasizing every church member’s responsibility to be a disciple of Jesus and to make disciples of Jesus. After much discussion, we determined the best time to offer the class would be Sunday mornings during the Adult Bible Fellowship/Sunday School hour. The advantages of provided childcare and a time when committed members were already at church outweighed the drawback of a one-hour per

session time constraint. We decided that we would offer the discipleship class to any adult church member who was willing to commit to eight of the ten training sessions. Interested people would contact me, and I would clear the list of interested names with the elder team before finalizing the class roster. Our initial target was to recruit twenty adult church members for this course.

In addition to my regular preaching and pastoral duties, I spent a considerable amount of time during the first four weeks of January 2023 developing the ten-week curriculum for “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker.”<sup>1</sup> I was able to draw much from the sources that I had read for chapters 2 and 3 of this project. My priority was to inspire obedience to the discipleship principles that we learned each week. The challenge was to allow enough space within the teaching curriculum for significant class discussion so that members of the class could stir each other up to be and make disciples, and to also provide some loving accountability for each other. I did provide references to books related to the theme each week for further reading (if interested), but the only homework was to go out and implement what we had discussed each week. The first four weeks focused on being disciples of Jesus, while the final six weeks emphasized aspects of making disciples. I submitted the curriculum for the course to the elder team and received helpful feedback<sup>2</sup> and enthusiastic approval to proceed.

I also used this time to put final touches on the Discipleship Practices Inventory (DPI)<sup>3</sup> and to gain approval for its use from my advisor and the SBTS research ethics committee. To help facilitate honesty in responses, I decided to make the DPIs anonymous. To help ensure anonymity, I asked responders to write their phone number at the top instead of their names. This would enable comparison of the results of the DPI

---

<sup>1</sup> The full curriculum for “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” is included in appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup> See appendix 2 for the Curriculum Evaluation Tool and chapter 5 for more details on helpful elder feedback on the curriculum.

<sup>3</sup> See appendix 3 for the Discipleship Practices Inventory.

taken at the beginning of the course with the DPI administered one month after course completion.<sup>4</sup>

### **Promotion for the Course**

During the four weeks of the preparation phase, I also promoted the course in multiple venues. We had begun a new sermon series working through the book of John in December 2022, so I was able to begin the new year with two sermons from the latter half of the first chapter of John as I introduced our theme for the year to the church: “Knowing Him + Making Him Known = Discipleship.”<sup>5</sup> On Sunday, January 8, I preached on John 1:35-42, emphasizing the responsibility that all who know Christ have to make him known to others (as we see in the example of both John the Baptist and his disciple Andrew in this text). I invited the congregation to our monthly “Rocky Family Night” that evening, where I detailed our plans for the “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” course. We handed out promotional flyers for the course, which included the following challenge: “We are looking for twenty people who will commit to doing their best to attend all classes and to not only take in, but to give away, all they learn. (*For instance, when we learn about effectively sharing the Gospel, prayerfully plan to go do it that week!*).”<sup>6</sup> The following Sunday, January 15, I preached through John 1:43-51 and continued our theme of “Knowing Him + Making Him Known = Discipleship,” emphasizing Jesus’s call to “follow me” (v. 43b).

While promoting the course to the entire church, I also approached several members that I knew were already faithful disciple-makers and encouraged them to sign up for the course. My reason for doing so was that I wanted to bolster class discussions,

---

<sup>4</sup> See chapter 5 for t-test results of the second DPI compared with the DPI administered at beginning of the course.

<sup>5</sup> See appendix 4 for the sermon notes for these two sermons.

<sup>6</sup> See appendix 5 for the promotional flyer.

knowing that church members who needed to grow in obedience to Christ's call to make disciples would be encouraged and challenged by interaction on the topic with their peers. Two families that I approached mentioned they had been sitting on the fence due to tentative travel plans or not wanting to take the place of someone who needed the class more. They signed up for the class and proved to be great influencers for discipleship.

By the end of January, twenty-nine church members had expressed a strong desire to take the course and committed to do their best to make at least eight of the ten sessions. The elders approved each of these members for the course, and we decided together that we should expand the roster for the class to thirty church members, which would include one visiting elder each week the class was taught. We decided to pause the course for the two Sundays of the Spring Break holiday since many in our church travel during that time. The discipleship course would begin on Sunday, February 5, and would proceed for the following six weeks through March 12. The assignment for Spring Break would be for each class member to host someone in their home that they had never hosted before with the aim of sharing Jesus with them. The course would resume on April 2 (with the theme of hospitality and with time for many to share about their experiences over the past several weeks) and conclude on April 23.

As the days drew near for the implementation phase of my project, I looked forward to teaching the discipleship course and seeing what God would do in the life of our church through it. At the same time, my wife and I noticed an uptick in spiritual warfare in our lives individually and as a family. Knowing that "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood" (Eph 6:12), we prayed fervently for God's protection on our family and on all who would take the discipleship course and asked him to use it to increase discipleship in the life of our church, for his glory.



## Implementation of “Every Disciple a Disciple Maker” Course (Weeks 5-16)

### Part 1: “Being a Disciple”

The first four weeks of the course emphasized being a disciple of Christ. Simply put, we cannot give away what we do not have. To help facilitate strong class interaction, we set tables up in the classroom in the shape of a horseshoe. From the start, I was encouraged by the willingness of most participants to open up and share from their hearts. I realized early on that my challenge would not be to get people to open up and talk, but to help shape class discussions so that we could get through each week’s lesson in one hour.

The first week of the course took place on February 5 and comprised of an introduction to the class and discussion on the definition of discipleship as well as common misconceptions about it. We took fifteen minutes for each member of the class to introduce themselves to one another and to quickly name one area in which they hoped to grow from the class. We then delved into a study of Matthew 22:36-40 and Matthew 28:19-20 to determine proper motivation for making disciples: love for God (obedience) and love for our neighbors (compassion). We defined discipleship as “the process of being a follower of Jesus, and helping others follow Jesus.”<sup>7</sup> In light of the Great Commission, we considered how Ephesians 4:11-14 calls all saints to “the work of ministry”; therefore, every disciple of Jesus should be a disciple-maker. We discussed our fears and misconceptions about discipleship and concluded that the two necessary components for discipleship to take place are the Word of God and authentic human relationships (guided by the Holy Spirit). I encouraged the class to be prepared to see God do great things in their lives as they step out in faith over the next ten weeks and seek to make disciples. I showed them Mark Dever’s book *Discipling: How to Help*

---

<sup>7</sup> This is the same definition of discipleship given in chapter 1.

*Others Follow Jesus*,<sup>8</sup> if they were interested in further reading on the general topic of discipleship. Their assignment for the week was to think about how they would share the Gospel in one minute. Before we dismissed, I explained the DPI which we would take at the beginning of our class session the next week.

The second week of the course took place the following Sunday, February 12. We took the first fifteen minutes to take the DPI, with each person filling in their phone number at the top instead of their name so that we could compare this DPI with a second DPI taken after completion of the course. (An initial look at the results of these anonymously filled out DPIs revealed that our church members had higher scores for understanding of discipleship than for implementation of discipleship.) We then engaged in a great discussion about how one could summarize the gospel in one minute, then in one sentence. We based our discussion upon Romans 5:8 while also consulting Colossians 2:13-14 and 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. We discussed the saving response to the gospel message: repentance and faith. I presented a matrix of the gospel message, with supporting Scriptures, that I have used for the last twenty eight years in evangelism that I simply call “The Five Points of the Gospel.”<sup>9</sup> I emphasized that these points do not always need to be shared in order or in one setting; they are simply reference points to ensure that the person clearly understands the essentials of the gospel and how to respond in repentance and faith. It is important that our evangelistic encounters be natural conversations in which people know that we care about them. I asked everyone to walk through “The Five Points of the Gospel” with someone in their life that week, and I shared with them Gilbert’s book *What Is the Gospel?*<sup>10</sup> for further reading on the topic.

---

<sup>8</sup> Mark Dever, *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016).

<sup>9</sup> I began using these points in evangelism while a young missionary in the Philippines in 1995. They were an amalgamation of “The Romans Road” and several gospel tracts that I had used in the past. I have included them in appendix 6.

<sup>10</sup> Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Gospel?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).

The third week of the course was on Sunday, February 19, and the topic was on spiritual disciplines. The big idea was this: We cannot give away what we do not have (discipleship), so what do we need to do to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ? Our key text was John 15:4-5: “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” We discussed three specific spiritual disciplines: Bible study (listening to God), prayer (talking to God), and Scripture memorization. I shared passages of Scripture, supporting each, but members of the class contributed many helpful practices. For further reading, I introduced Donald Whitney’s book on spiritual disciplines<sup>11</sup> and a book by Kenneth Boa<sup>12</sup> that my wife and I have used for years on praying Scripture back to God. The homework assignment was to take one hour that week to spend time with God and to share with someone in the class the following Sunday what the Lord had revealed during that time.

The fourth week took place on Sunday, February 26. The big idea this week was that Satan does not want Christians to be effective disciples or disciple-makers. Spiritual warfare is real. We need to recognize it, fight, and win. We considered James 4:6-7, 1 Peter 5:8-10, and Ephesians 6:12-17, carefully working through the illustration of each piece of armor and applying them to our lives. I taught that the mission of the church is to make disciples of all the nations (Matt 28:18-20); therefore, our overall posture as a worldwide church is offensive. But our overall posture as individual Christians in spiritual warfare is defensive—standing your ground against the enemy until he flees—then we continue marching forward with the gospel. I introduced three

---

<sup>11</sup> Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2014).

<sup>12</sup> Kenneth Boa, *Face to Face: Praying the Scriptures for Intimate Worship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997).

resources for those interested in further reading: Jim Logan's *Reclaiming Surrendered Ground*,<sup>13</sup> C. S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters*,<sup>14</sup> and the Puritan William Gurnall's *The Christian in Complete Armour*.<sup>15</sup> The homework assignment was for each member of the class to prayerfully ask God to help them select five people in their life who do not yet have a relationship with God and to daily pray for their salvation.

## **Part 2: "Making Disciples"**

Following Jesus should transform us into disciples who are passionate about knowing God and making him known to others. The second part of the training (weeks 5-10) focused on making disciples. We reconfigured the tables for this section of the training into five groups that would seat six people each to facilitate more intimate conversations.

The fifth week of training was Sunday, March 5. After looking together at Ephesians 6:18-20, Romans 10:1, and 1 Timothy 2:1, we spent the majority of this training session praying at our tables together for the five people that we had each selected to daily pray for their salvation. We also discussed practical ways that we could seek to build relationships with these people. I introduced Bill Hull's discipleship book *Choose the Life*<sup>16</sup> to the class and gave them the homework assignment to prayerfully seek to transition a normal conversation with someone (believer or unbeliever) the following week to the spiritual.

The sixth week of the course was on Sunday, March 12, and focused on spiritual conversations. The big idea was that faithfully making disciples means we need

---

<sup>13</sup> Jim Logan, *Reclaiming Surrendered Ground: Protecting Your Family from Spiritual Attacks* (Chicago: Moody, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: HarperCollins, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1991).

<sup>16</sup> Bill Hull, *Choose the Life: Exploring a Faith That Embraces Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004).

to intentionally speak with others about Jesus in the course of our daily lives. We need to learn to bridge conversations from the “secular” to the “spiritual.” I began by asking, “How did it go? What did you learn about transitioning conversations to the spiritual?” Many shared lessons learned, and at this point the class was teaching the class. I then assigned one of the following passages to each of the five groups and asked them to discuss together how it applies to transitioning conversations to the spiritual: Colossians 4:5-6, 1 Peter 3:15, 2 Corinthians 5:20-21, Matthew 5:14-16, and Hebrews 10:24-25. After significant time in group discussions, each group read their text and presented their thoughts to the class. We discussed the reasons we often fail to talk about Jesus with both non-Christians and fellow Christians. We then brainstormed strategies for bridging conversations to Christ. We agreed that an effective way to transition conversations to the spiritual, and to demonstrate to people that we genuinely care for them, is to ask permission to pray for them on the spot when they share a personal need. I introduced Doug Pollock’s book *God Space: Where Spiritual Conversations Happen Naturally*.<sup>17</sup>

We took a break the following two Sundays for the Spring Break holiday, but I gave the class the homework assignment to host someone during that time in their home that they had never hosted before with the aim of sharing Jesus with them. Beth and I invited our next-door neighbors over for dinner. We had been praying for this family for years and had looked for opportunities to minister to them, but usually sensed reservation on their part since they are unchurched and know I am a pastor. We were pleased they came over, allowed us to pray for them, and that both families enjoyed the time together.

The seventh week of the course took place on Sunday, April 2, with the theme of Christian hospitality. I had some concern that we might lose momentum due to the two Sundays we were off, but the class returned ready to share about their experiences

---

<sup>17</sup> Doug Pollock, *God Space: Where Spiritual Conversations Happen Naturally* (Loveland, CO: Group, 2009).

extending hospitality. One man, who is a talented chef, shared how he and his wife invited some neighbors over for dinner, but overall, the conversation was awkward. He tried to turn the conversation to Christ but was rebuffed at every turn. But he and his next-door neighbor (a new member of our church) had started an evening social hour in his driveway, and they were determined to keep extending hospitality to this family. This led to a conversation about the importance of genuinely loving the people with whom we try to share Christ rather than treating them as a project. We considered the command of Hebrews 13:2 and Abraham's example of hospitality in Genesis 18:1-8. I encouraged the class with Will Metzger's quote: "We should open up our homes as well as our hearts to others. To invite people to be part of our lives and/or families is an important demonstration of the gospel in action."<sup>18</sup> We discussed God's priority on hospitality: he gives it as a qualification for elders (1 Tim 3:2), he commends it to all Christians (1 Pet 4:9), and he extends it to us (John 1:38-39). I shared the story of Rosaria Butterfield's salvation (through the hospitality of a pastor and his family) and commended her book *The Gospel Comes with a House Key: Practicing Radically Ordinary Hospitality in Our Post-Christian World*.<sup>19</sup> As we closed in prayer, I challenged the class (as homework) to go share the gospel with someone that week.

The eighth week took place on Sunday, April 9, and the theme was gospel sharing. We started out by sharing about gospel opportunities the Lord gave us the week prior. I recounted my conversation with a high school boy whose mother had suddenly and recently died. A year ago, his older sister had tragically died. We had held the funeral at our church as an outreach to this unchurched family. His mother had been released from jail for her daughter's funeral. She sat on the front row weeping and nodding her

---

<sup>18</sup> Will Metzger, *Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 157.

<sup>19</sup> Rosaria Butterfield, *The Gospel Comes with a House Key: Practicing Radically Ordinary Hospitality in Our Post-Christian World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018).

head that she was a sinner and needed Jesus. Now she had tragically passed away. Noah had remembered our church's hospitality and requested that the funeral for his mother be held at our church. As we planned his mother's funeral, I sat across from Noah and asked him if he understood the gospel. I gave him my Bible and walked through "The Five Points of the Gospel" with him, letting him read the Scriptures. He said he believed this message was true but had never repented of his sins or asked Jesus to save him. We prayed to God together, and Noah asked Jesus to save his soul. The class joined me in praying that Noah would grow in faith, come to church, and pursue discipleship. Others shared stories of faithful evangelism that week with strangers and loved ones. Each time, we stopped and prayed for that person.

We considered together the words of Romans 1:16—"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." We also considered encouraging words from Mark Dever,<sup>20</sup> J. I. Packer,<sup>21</sup> and Mack Stiles<sup>22</sup> on the subject of evangelism. We spent the majority of the class period reviewing several gospel sharing tools, including "The Five Points of the Gospel" and "The Romans Road." We thought about the need to better structure our time to reach our neighbors, co-workers, and non-Christian friends with the gospel. For further reading, I recommended Packer's excellent book *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*.

---

<sup>20</sup> Mark Dever explains, "When you understand that evangelism isn't converting people, but that it is telling them the wonderful truth about God, the great news about Jesus Christ, then obedience to the call to evangelize can become certain and joyful." Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 136.

<sup>21</sup> J. I. Packer claims, "Evangelism, we have learned, is a task appointed to all God's people everywhere. It is the task of communicating a message from the Creator to rebel mankind. The message begins with information and ends with invitation. The information concerns God's work of making His Son a perfect Savior for sinners. The invitation is God's summons to mankind generally to come to the Saviour and find life." J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 92.

<sup>22</sup> Mack Stiles writes, "To be compelled by love to share the gospel individually is a beautiful thing, but when it happens in community, it's joyfully glorious. The need to badger people to share their faith evaporates. It becomes something we long to do. It becomes a way of thinking." J. Mack Stiles, *Evangelism: How the Whole Church Speaks of Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 48.

The homework was to follow up with the person that we had shared the gospel with last week.

The ninth week of the course took place on Sunday, April 16. The topic was going deeper in Christian relationships: building vulnerability and accountability. We discussed the model of generational discipleship given in 2 Timothy 2:2: “And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” We considered Bobby Jamieson’s quote: “One of the chief means by which we grow as disciples is through personal relationships in which we bring the truths of the gospel to bear on the details of life.”<sup>23</sup> We discussed practical ways in which we might forge meaningful Christian relationships with other believers in which we “bear one another’s burdens” (Gal 6:2) and “lift up” (Eccl 4:10) each other. We recognized the importance of developing vulnerability and accountability in our discipling relationships. The class discussed ways to build vulnerability and accountability in the context of Life Groups, Adult Bible Fellowships, small groups (like quads), and one-to-one discipleship relationships. I recommended books by Bobby Jamieson,<sup>24</sup> Leroy Eims,<sup>25</sup> and David Platt<sup>26</sup> for those interested in reading further about one-to-one discipleship. The homework assignment was to pray about inviting someone into a discipleship relationship.

The tenth and final week of the course took place on Sunday morning, April 23. I challenged the class to take the next step into discipleship by asking: “Who is your one? Who will you help, and be helped by, in following Jesus?” The class spent the majority of this session sharing with one another in small groups who they planned to

---

<sup>23</sup> Bobby Jamieson, *Growing One Another: Discipleship in the Church*, Healthy Church Study Guides (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 31.

<sup>24</sup> Jamieson, *Growing One Another*.

<sup>25</sup> Leroy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978).

<sup>26</sup> David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from The American Dream* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2010).



invite into a discipleship relationship and praying together for the endeavor. During the final portion of the class, we considered the endgame of our discipleship relationships: “for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph 4:12-13). We discussed what maturity looks like and the role of suffering in the mission of making Christ known (2 Tim 2:3). Several members of the class shared discipleship resources that they had found helpful, such as materials put out by the Navigators as well as Greg Ogden’s book *Discipleship Essentials*.<sup>27</sup> I briefly shared *Masterlife*<sup>28</sup> for those looking for a long-term series to walk through with a disciple. We concluded with a time of prayer together for further faithfulness in discipleship.

#### **Follow-Up of “Every Disciple a Disciple Maker” Course (Weeks 17-20)**

Several members of the class suggested that we celebrate the completion of the course with a breakfast together the following Sunday morning. I was encouraged by the bond that this multi-generational group of people had developed over the past three months as they learned and practiced discipleship. I was scheduled to teach a membership class the following Sunday morning during the Adult Bible Fellowship/Sunday School hour but asked another elder to take that for me so that I could spend one more Sunday morning with this group of disciple-makers. We enjoyed an amazing breakfast (the chef guy can cook!) together on April 30, and I encouraged my fellow disciple-makers to continue practicing all that they had learned about discipleship during our time together.

---

<sup>27</sup> Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018).

<sup>28</sup> Avery T. Willis, *Masterlife - Book Set: A Biblical Process for Growing Disciples* (Nashville: Lifeway Press, 1997).

We prayed that the Lord would help all of us be faithful in knowing Christ and making him known.

On week 20 (the week of May 21), one month after the conclusion of the discipleship course, we conducted the second DPI via email. I wanted to wait a month after the completion of the course to better gauge if this course had made a lasting impact on discipleship practices. Twenty-three members of the class completed this second DPI. In the next chapter, a t-test will compare the results of this post-discipleship course DPI with the results of the initial DPI taken at the beginning of the course to determine the success of this project.

## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATION OF PROJECT FOR EQUIPPING DISCIPLE-MAKERS AT ROCKY BAYOU BAPTIST CHURCH IN NICEVILLE, FLORIDA

This final chapter evaluates the ministry project to equip disciple-makers at Rocky Bayou Baptist Church in Niceville, Florida. The project's purpose and goals are evaluated, followed by an assessment of the strengths and weakness of the project. I consider what I would do differently if I were to implement this project again, and I conclude with theological and personal reflections.

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

The purpose of this project was to raise up and equip disciple-makers at Rocky Bayou Baptist Church in Niceville, Florida. The members of RBBC are committed to the authority of Scripture, desire to worship God in truth, passionately engage in missions, volunteer quickly to serve, and genuinely love one another. The church's vision statement is "We exist to know him and make him known." Every member of RBBC would agree that God has called Christians to disciple the nations (Matt 28:19). Yet not every member feels personally equipped to make disciples or is actually in a one-on-one discipleship relationship. This project's purpose therefore was necessary to help RBBC obey Christ's command and fulfill her vision, for God's glory.

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

Successful completion of this project depended upon the accomplishment of three goals. The first goal was to assess the current knowledge and practice of disciple-making among a group of twenty to thirty volunteer members of RBBC. This goal was

measured by administering the Discipleship Practices Inventory (DPI) to this group of elder-approved church members who volunteered to honestly complete the DPI and then to later complete a discipleship training course. This goal was successfully met when twenty-nine church members completed the DPI at the start of the “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” course. (Twenty-three completed both this initial DPI and the DPI administered one month after course completion; their cumulative results of the first DPI are listed in table 1.) This inventory was analyzed yielding a clearer picture of current discipleship practices among RBBC members. The elders noted that church members reported higher marks for knowledge than practice of discipleship in their daily lives.

Table 1. Results of first DPI (Feb. 12) at start of “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker”

<b>Question</b>	<b>SD (1)</b>	<b>D (2)</b>	<b>DS (3)</b>	<b>AS (4)</b>	<b>A (5)</b>	<b>SA (6)</b>	<b>Average</b>
1. I understand what it means to be a disciple of Christ.				2	9	12	5.43
2. I read the Bible daily.		1	2	5	6	9	5.09
3. I have a consistent daily quiet time/ devotion.		4		8	6	5	4.35
4. I know how to study the Bible.		1		9	10	3	4.61
5. I have a consistent prayer life.			3	10	7	3	4.43
6. I am aware of God’s presence in my life.				2	8	13	5.48
7. I regularly pray for the salvation of specific people.		2	6	3	9	3	4.22
8. I am intentional in my relationships with unbelievers.		6	3	11	2	1	3.52
9. I have memorized strategic biblical texts to use in sharing my faith.		5	2	6	4	6	4.17
10. I can clearly explain the gospel to an unbeliever.			2	6	9	6	4.83
11. I can clearly explain to an unbeliever how to be saved.			2	5	8	8	4.96

<b>Question</b>	<b>SD (1)</b>	<b>D (2)</b>	<b>DS (3)</b>	<b>AS (4)</b>	<b>A (5)</b>	<b>SA (6)</b>	<b>Average</b>
12. Using Scripture, I can lead another person to faith in Christ.		4		7	8	4	4.35
13. I am comfortable sharing my faith with unbelievers.	3	5	3	7	5		3.26
14. I look for opportunities in my daily life to share my faith.	2	4	6	8	3		3.26
15. I consider personal accountability with another believer important for my spiritual growth.			3	4	3	13	5.13
16. I can explain what it means to make a disciple.	1	1	1	9	6	5	4.43
17. I have a person in my life who discipled me.	2	4	3	7	4	3	3.70
18. I feel equipped to disciple a new believer.	1	3	3	5	9	2	4.04
19. I am capable of training others to be strong believers.	3		2	9	7	2	4.00
20. I am currently discipling another believer.	4	7	2	3	4	3	3.22

The second goal was to develop a ten-week discipleship training curriculum entitled “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker.”<sup>1</sup> This training material sought to increase church members’ knowledge about biblical discipleship responsibilities and practices and to equip members to implement what they have learned weekly in authentic one-on-one disciple-making relationships. This goal was measured by the elders of RBBC who utilized a rubric<sup>2</sup> to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, and applicability of the curriculum. This goal was successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criteria met or exceeded level three (“sufficient”) of the rubric. The elders gave the curriculum high marks (100 percent at level 3—“sufficient”—or

---

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

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

level 4—“exemplary”) but also provided valuable feedback which enabled me to make some significant improvements to the curriculum. Of note were the suggestions to sharpen the “big idea” points for each lesson, include more Old Testament Scripture references, and limit content in certain lessons to provide more space for discussion. One elder provided wise input in multiple places to keep the focus on sharing Christ in an authentically relational manner. He reminded me that people are not projects; they know whether we genuinely love them.

The third goal was to modify the knowledge and practice of disciple-making among the group of twenty to thirty volunteer members of RBBC. During the ten-week discipleship training, emphasis was placed on reaching out to unbelieving members of our community with the purpose of sharing the gospel with them and building disciple-making relationships. This goal was measured by administering the same DPI to the church members (that they had taken at the beginning of the course) one month after they had completed the “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” training. Twenty-three members of the class took both DPIs. This goal was considered successfully met when the t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-course DPI scores:  $t(22) = 6.778$ ,  $p < .0000001$ . Since the t-stat of -6.778 (or the absolute value of 6.778) is larger than the t-critical two tail value of 2.074, the teaching intervention of this class made a difference. Since the p value is  $< .0000001$ , which is significantly less than the required value of  $p < .05$ , the difference was not by chance. These statistical results prove that this project made a significant increase in the knowledge and practice of disciple-making among the group of volunteer RBBC members who completed the “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” training.

Table 2. Average DPI Scores (from 6 pt Likert Scale), before and after  
 “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” Course

Question	Average DPI Score Before Course	Average DPI Score After Course
1. I understand what it means to be a disciple of Christ.	5.43	5.74
2. I read the Bible daily.	5.09	5.13
3. I have a consistent daily quiet time/ devotion.	4.35	5.03
4. I know how to study the Bible.	4.61	4.91
5. I have a consistent prayer life.	4.43	4.91
6. I am aware of God’s presence in my life.	5.48	5.57
7. I regularly pray for the salvation of specific people.	4.22	4.78
8. I am intentional in my relationships with unbelievers.	3.52	4.57
9. I have memorized strategic biblical texts to use in sharing my faith.	4.17	4.74
10. I can clearly explain the gospel to an unbeliever.	4.83	5.39
11. I can clearly explain to an unbeliever how to be saved.	4.96	5.30
12. Using Scripture, I can lead another person to faith in Christ.	4.35	5.04
13. I am comfortable sharing my faith with unbelievers.	3.26	4.61
14. I look for opportunities in my daily life to share my faith.	3.26	4.52
15. I consider personal accountability with another believer important for my spiritual growth.	5.13	5.48
16. I can explain what it means to make a disciple.	4.43	5.17
17. I have a person in my life who discipled me.	3.70	4.52
18. I feel equipped to disciple a new believer.	4.04	4.87
19. I am capable of training others to be strong believers.	4.00	4.78
20. I am currently discipling another believer.	3.22	4.30

Table 3. Numerical DPI scores, before and after  
 “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker”

<b>“Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” - Did we make a difference?</b>			
<b>Participant</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Percentage Change</b>
1	87	99	13.8
2	96	104	8.3
3	98	97	-1.0
4	86	98	14.0
5	80	102	27.5
6	88	97	10.2
7	93	97	4.3
8	90	105	16.7
9	93	105	12.9
10	93	114	22.6
11	73	93	27.4
12	93	94	1.1
13	87	108	24.1
14	92	111	20.7
15	65	88	35.4
16	87	110	26.4
17	92	109	18.5
18	80	109	36.3
19	55	79	43.6
20	90	104	15.6
21	91	86	-5.5



<b>“Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” - Did we make a difference?</b>			
<b>Participant</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Percentage Change</b>
22	106	109	2.8
23	69	70	1.4
20 Item survey with 6pt Likert Scale / max total score of 120			
<b>Average Percent Change: 16.4%</b>			

### **Strengths of the Project**

One of the primary strengths of this project was the investment of RBBC’s elder team in it. They provided wonderful input into the project design and curriculum, worked out a rotation so that each elder could sit in a class at least once, and covered it all in prayer. I was reminded of the truth that “iron sharpens iron” (Prov 27:17) and the African proverb “If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.” I am hopeful that our elders’ involvement in this project will enable us to use this curriculum more widely throughout the church in the future.

Recruiting several known disciple-makers (who desired to continue to grow) proved helpful. They had immediate influence in the class. I was impressed from day one how openly almost every member of the class shared about their hopes and fears regarding discipleship. Our setup of sitting in a large “U-shape” and later in smaller groups helped facilitate wonderful discussions, but having influencers in the class who openly shared about their victories and failures in evangelism and discipleship did more to lower barriers and inspire towards obedience. I was grateful for the wisdom of several elders in reminding me of my tendency to over-teach a lesson. They encouraged me to create space for the class to stir each other up.

I believe the curriculum—with its focus on going out and practically obeying each lesson during the week—was a strength of the project. But this project’s greatest

strength was the class members themselves. Our church members signed up to be stretched and to grow. They stepped out in faith and did the homework. It awakened hope and deeper passion for God and for his work in transforming souls from death to life. Class members came back and reported how they had hosted neighbors or shared the gospel with someone they met at the grocery store or bank, and we would stop and pray for God to change hearts. As they obeyed, they saw God move. We were all encouraged by each other's obedience.

During our lesson on hospitality, Rochelle shared about her ministry to women in her neighborhood. Her husband—a military doctor—was completing his final year of residency and was working eighty hours a week. But he agreed to allow her to open up their garage to all the kids on the street. He gave up his man-cave so that they could create a safe space for neighborhood children to gather with their kids to play. Rochelle kept a refrigerator stocked with popsicles in the garage. It was open during daylight hours and especially popular after school. Kids congregated in the garage, and over time mothers began gathering in the driveway, then in the garage, and eventually in Rochelle's kitchen and living room. Rochelle shared the gospel, and several mothers gave their lives to Christ. The souls were worth all the popsicle sticks. I had not personally recruited Rochelle or her husband to our class; God brought them. But as they humbly shared about discipleship, God spoke to more hearts in the room about opening up their homes.

I had recruited Amanda, an optometrist, and her husband James, a special-operations pilot, to join the class. Both have been passionate about discipleship since God saved them ten years ago. As we shared prayer requests for the person we planned to share the gospel with that week, Amanda asked us to pray for her mother. Eddie, a seventy-year-old man from a minority background, had joined the class after much conversation and prayer together about faith overcoming fear. His wife (a life-long Buddhist from Taiwan) had made a death-bed profession of faith in Jesus the previous year. We often prayed together for God's salvation of his son. Eddie felt moved to pray

for Amanda's mother and decided to call her that week to share Christ with her. Similar to moving embers together in a campfire to create a flame, I observed our members stirring up a passion in each other's hearts for discipleship. As the weeks progressed, encouragement and excitement grew.

### **Weaknesses of the Project**

Time constraints were the project's greatest weakness. It is hard to thoroughly teach a lesson on an aspect of discipleship, enjoy a spirited discussion, pray for one another in depth, and report on encouraging stories (how God used our faithfulness over the past week, i.e., accountability) in one hour. We elders determined the Adult Bible Fellowship/Sunday School hour would be the most conducive towards recruiting busy church members who could attend all the classes, but I wish we had more time. Also, it was challenging to fit as many aspects of discipleship as could have been helpful into the ten-week timeframe of the project. I rejoiced each week at the growing level of excitement in the class as members overcame fear with faith and obeyed Jesus's call to discipleship, but I wondered if the flame we had stoked would endure. I wish we had more time together.

As the weeks of the "Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker" class progressed, I realized that I was a weakness of the project. While preparing the curriculum, from time to time I had thought critically of my church, considering how we often are more disposed towards knowledge than obedience (a form of "Christian" consumerism). Sadly, that is also true of me. I retreat too often to the comfort zone of my office. I may excuse it with the need to prepare rich sermons and the busyness of pastoral responsibilities, but if I am not reaching out to my neighbors in my neighborhood, how can I expect my church members to do so in theirs? Sermons about our responsibility to make disciples in Niceville and around the world will be more passionate and convincing if I am obeying them first.

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

First, I would prayerfully review the curriculum and resolve, with God's help, to do everything that I plan to teach before I start teaching it. Am I drinking deeply from God's Word and communing with him in prayer before I start preparing a message? Am I daily praying for the salvation of five neighbors? Do I regularly invite them into my home to build authentic relationships through which I shine the light of Christ? Did I try to point the AC repair man to Jesus yesterday, or was I just concerned about what he could do for me? It is easy enough to accelerate these disciplines for a ten-week period, but these aspects of discipleship need to consistently mark my life before I try to teach them to others.

Second, I would like to try teaching this curriculum in a different format with more time. It would be interesting to use this "Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker" curriculum within some of our Life Groups which meet in homes throughout the week. It would be great to see some of the members of this class lead their Life Groups through this curriculum. I hope to brainstorm some of these ideas with our elder team at an upcoming elder retreat. Moving forward will mean we have to step out a little more from our comfort zones.

If we were to try a second round of "Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker" in one of our Sunday morning Adult Bible Fellowships (for ten weeks), I would try to schedule it to avoid interruptions like Spring Break or the Christmas holidays.

### **Theological Reflections**

God deserves all the glory for changing hearts by the power of his Word through discipleship. When we step out in faith and obey Jesus's command to make disciples, he changes lives and strengthens our own faith. Through the process of teaching this discipleship course, I observed the Holy Spirit lighting flames in the hearts of our RBBC members and in my own heart. As I prepared the curriculum, I wondered if this discipleship course would really make a difference. God did, through the power of

his Word (Heb 4:12) and through each class member as they stirred each other up to obey Christ (Heb 10:24-25). RBBC is experiencing a time of spiritual growth: Life Groups and Quads are flourishing, more guests arrive each Sunday due to personal invitations from church members, new Christians are being baptized (the most in the seven years I have served here), and more members are discipling one another.

God's glory is a powerful motivation for discipleship. I believe our church members are looking up, beholding the glory of Christ, and reflecting it to those around them. They are knowing him and making him known. I praise God for his workmanship (Eph 2:10) in our lives. He is stoking the embers of obedience into flames of discipleship. His glory is our motivation and our end, "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen" (Rom 11:36).

### **Personal Reflections**

I began work on this doctoral project several years ago during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was a difficult time for many churches, including our own. It was a difficult time for me as a pastor. I was discouraged by the suffering and challenges of the pandemic, but even more by the sinful responses to it that I observed. Looking back, I recognize that my heart was not without sin. I developed a critical attitude towards my church family, labeling them in my mind as being a part of "consumer Christianity." I sold RBBC short. During the course of this project, God has worked great things in our church family. He is working great things in my heart. I am a pastor growing in appreciation and affection for his church. RBBC is his workmanship (Eph 2:10; Phil 1:6).

I also recognize my need to always lead by example. Along with everyone else, I need regular encouragement and constant accountability to step out in faith and share the gospel with neighbors and friends. I must model transparency in relationships with other Christians that facilitates authentic Christian growth. I need to not only give, but to receive help from my brothers and sisters in following Jesus. This project has

reminded me of our need as an elder team to be a true band of brothers for one another. I pray that we will spur RBBC towards deeper discipleship through our example together.

### **Conclusion**

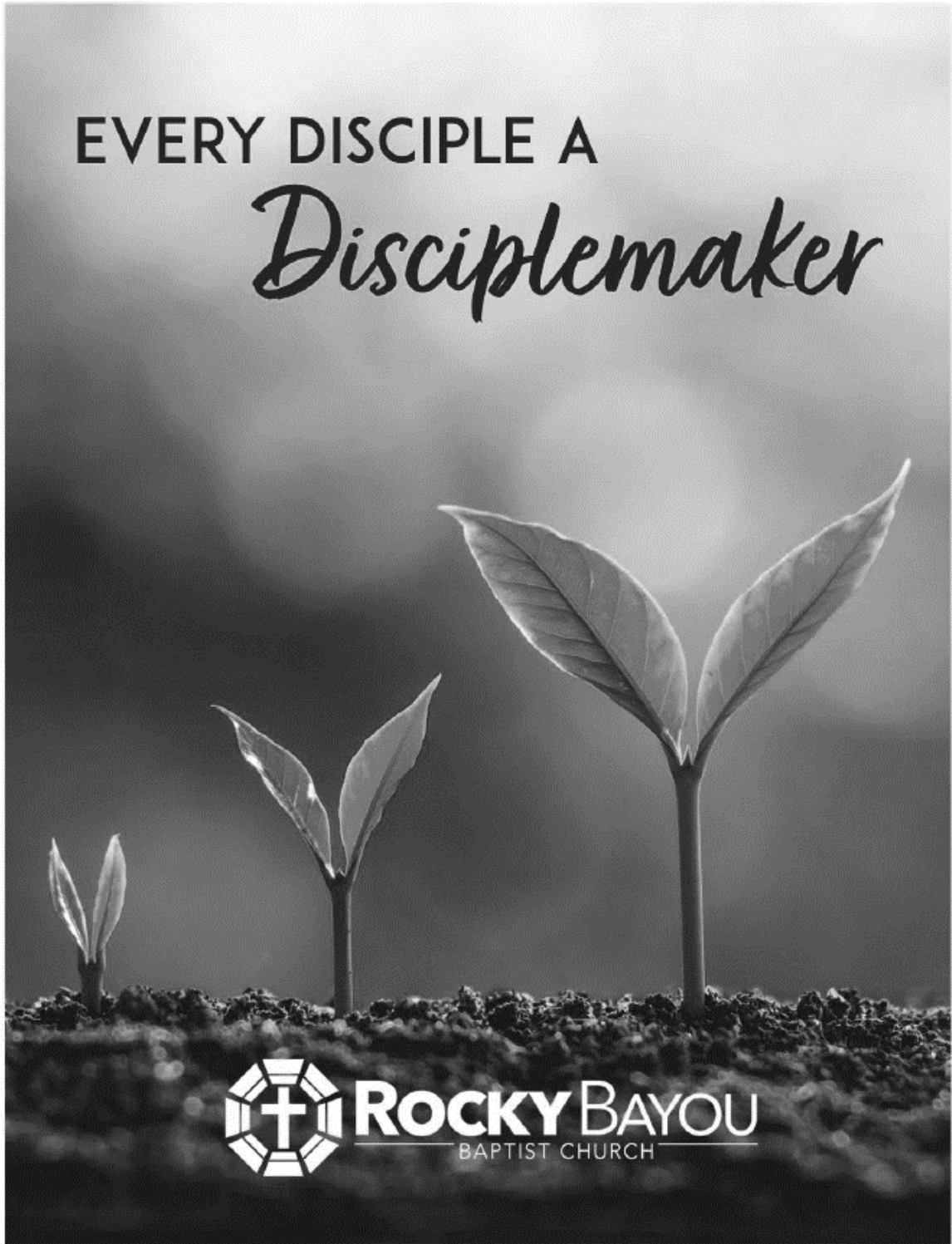
This project to raise up and equip disciple-makers at RBBC has taken us one step closer towards our church's vision to know Christ and to make him known. It has helped a group of us step outside our comfort zones to obey Christ as disciple-makers. I am thankful for my church family. I am thankful for our commitment to God's Word, to his worship, to missions, and to helping each other follow Jesus. I look forward to attempting great things for God around the world, but also in our neighborhood. I pray we will continue this journey of faith together.

APPENDIX 1  
CURRICULUM LESSON PLANS

This curriculum, titled “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker,” was developed for this project and taught over a period of ten Sunday mornings to a group of thirty members of RBBC who volunteered to implement the lessons they learned during the week.

EVERY DISCIPLE A

*Disciplemaker*



**ROCKY BAYOU**  
BAPTIST CHURCH



## “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” Lesson-Plans

### Part 1: “Being a Disciple”

#### Week 1 (Feb.5): Course Intro / Overview, What is Discipleship?

**Big Idea:** What is discipleship exactly, and why and how should we go about it?

**Key Text: Matt 28:19-20:** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”<sup>1</sup>

- **Intros** – 15 min...
  - Name.
  - How long you have been at Rocky?
  - One area you hope to grow in from this class.

#### First Things First: **Why Make Disciples?**

**Matt 22:36-40:** “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.** This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: **You shall love your neighbor as yourself.** On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

#### **1. Love for God:** Discipleship is His Plan and Command... It glorifies Him.

- **Matt 22:37** is a quote from the *Shema (Deut 6:5)* – idea is to love the Lord with all our being.
- Jesus said: **John 14:15:** “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”
- What was his last command before He ascended to heaven? We call it the Great Commission:

**Matt 28:19-20:** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

**John MacArthur:** “Every Christian is a disciple. In fact, the Lord’s Great Commission was to go into all the world and ‘make disciples... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you’ (Matt 28:19-20). That means that the mission of the church and the goal of evangelism is to make disciples.”<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> All Scripture references are taken from the *English Standard Version*.

<sup>2</sup> John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 221.

**James Montgomery Boice** warns, “There is a fatal defect in the life of Christ’s church in the twentieth century: a lack of true discipleship. Discipleship means forsaking everything to follow Christ.”<sup>3</sup>

## **2. Love for Neighbor: Salvation /Discipleship is their Greatest Need:**

**Acts 4:12:** And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

**John 14:6:** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

**John 3:18:** Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

### **What is a Disciple? What is Discipleship?**

**Disciple:** A **follower** of Jesus Christ. (From the Greek, *mathAtAs*, learner.)

**Discipleship:** The process of **being** a follower of Jesus, and **helping others** follow Jesus.

**DA Carson:** “disciples are those who hear, understand, and obey Jesus’ teaching... it is binding on *all* Jesus’ disciples to make others what they themselves are—disciples of Jesus Christ.”<sup>4</sup>

**Eph 4:11-14:** And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, **to equip the saints for the work of ministry**, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

### **Discussion: What Misconceptions and Fears do we have about discipleship?**

- **Discipleship is Not A Power Distance Relationship** (Jedi-Master vs. Paduan)

**Matt 20:25-28:** But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

---

<sup>3</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Christ’s Call to Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 13.

<sup>4</sup> D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 9, *Matthew and Mark* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 596.

**John 13:35:** “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- **Discipleship is Not Just A Curriculum...**

American Christians tend to think of discipleship as going through a training curriculum during a set time, but Robert Coleman explains how “having called his men, Jesus made a practice of being with them. This was the essence of his training program—just letting his disciples follow him.”<sup>5</sup> Jesus’ approach was more organic: “Knowledge was gained by association before it was understood by explanation... One living sermon is worth a hundred explanations.”<sup>6</sup>

- **Discipleship is Not Just Bible Knowledge...** you need to apply it to life...in Relationship!

**What are the necessary components for discipleship to take place?**

1. The Word of God
2. Authentic Human Relationships (with the Holy Spirit)

- “Be prepared to see God do GREAT things!”

***For Further Reading:***

Dever, Mark. *Discipling. How to Help Others Follow Jesus*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016.

- **Homework:** Think about how you would share the Gospel in one minute.

---

<sup>5</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism and Discipleship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), 41.

<sup>6</sup> Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism and Discipleship*, 42.

## Week 2 (Feb.12): What is the Gospel?

**Big Idea:** If we are going to share the gospel, we need to understand it. How would you summarize the gospel in one minute?

**Discussion:** Several of you share the gospel with us in one minute (5 min.)

- **Take Discipleship Practices Inventory** (15 min.) – instead of name, phone # at top.

**Key Text: Rom 5:8:** but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**Discussion:** If we had to summarize the gospel in just one sentence, what would it be?

*Jesus Christ paid the price for Sinners like us by Dying on the cross for our Sins and rising from the dead.*

**Col 2:13-14** And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

**Rom 5:6-8** For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person-- though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die--**but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

**1 Cor 15:3-4:** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures...

What should be our response to the message of the Gospel?

**Repent of your sins and believe in Jesus Christ.**

**Acts 16:29-31** And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "**Believe** in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

- Context: Paul, to the Philippian jailer.

**Acts 26:19-20** "Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should **repent** and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their **repentance.**"

- Context: Paul before King Agrippa.

“**Repent**” means to turn (one’s orientation). In Greek, “**Believe**” (*pisteo*) is the active verb form of the noun “Faith” (*pistis*).

- Therefore, to believe in Christ has much deeper meaning than simple cognitive belief (for instance: “I believe George Washington was the first president of the United States.”)
- It includes mental assent, but to believe in Christ is to put one’s entire faith in Jesus (to depend fully on Him, or “to lean” one’s soul completely on Jesus).

**Greg Gilbert** summarizes the gospel: “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>7</sup>

### **The Five Points of the Gospel:**

#### **1. God Made You. *So He has ownership rights!***

**Gen 1:1:** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

**Psalm 139: 13:** For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

#### **2. You Have Sinned Against God. *The wages of sin is eternal death!***

**Rom 3:23:** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

**Rom 6:23a:** For the wages of sin is death,

**Rev 21:8:** “But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

#### **3. Jesus Christ Died for Your Sins, and Rose from the Dead. *Yes, He did!***

**Rom 5:8:** but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**1 Cor 15:3-4:** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures...

**Acts 4:12:** “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

---

<sup>7</sup> Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Gospel?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 36.

#### **4. You Can (Must) be Saved Through Faith in Christ! *Repent and Believe on Him!***

**John 3:16:** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

**Acts 3:19:** Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out...

**Rom 10:9:** because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

**Eph 2:8-9:** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

#### **5. You Must Now Live for Jesus! *He is Lord!***

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

**Gal 2:20:** I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

#### ***For Further Reading:***

Gilbert, Greg. *What Is the Gospel?* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.

- **Homework:** Walk through the Five Points of the Gospel with Someone.

### Week 3 (Feb.19): Spiritual Disciplines

**Big Idea:** We can't give away what we don't have (discipleship), so what do we need to do to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ?

**Key Text: John 15:4-5:** **Abide** in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it **abides** in the vine, neither can you, unless you **abide** in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever **abides** in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

**Stuart Weber:** “We will become true disciples of the Messiah, effectively reproducing other disciples, if we **abide** with him and live out what we learn from him.”<sup>8</sup>

**Discussion:** What does it mean to **abide** with Jesus?

**Mark Irving:** “The word **abide** gives us a good, succinct summary of our phrase, ‘active dependence.’ When you abide somewhere, you dwell there, remain there, or live there... Jesus wants us to remain so close to Him and become so familiar with his words that we learn how to navigate our spiritual lives in this world.”<sup>9</sup>

**We have a Personal Relationship with God** through Christ:

**1 John 3:1a:** See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.

**Rev 3:20:** “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”

**Matt 28:20b:** “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

It has been said that **we become what we behold**.<sup>10</sup> The things that fill our mind shape who we are. So we need to set our minds on Christ!

**Col 3:1-3:** If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

---

<sup>8</sup> Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew*, Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 1. (Nashville: B&H, 2000), 483.

<sup>9</sup> Mark Irving, *Follow: The Journey of a Lifetime* (Franklin, TN: self-published, 2021), 94.

<sup>10</sup> I drew help on this lesson from a course I took on spiritual disciplines from Dr. Joseph Harrod at SBTS in the summer of 2013. Some of the concepts in this lesson, such as becoming what we behold, the difference between union and communion with Christ, and helpful principles of memorization of and meditation on scripture, were gleaned from the wonderful class.

**2 Cor 3:18-19:** And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

**Union** with Christ is based on Jesus' once for all work on the cross, but **communion** with Christ is based on our daily walk with Him.

- So **time** and **communication** with Him are essential.
- Communication = **Listening and Speaking**.
- We are pursuing intimacy and communion with Him, which comes through the practice of **Spiritual Disciplines**.

**RBBC Core Value #14:** We believe in the importance of regular personal **spiritual disciplines** and strive to nurture and develop them in our lives.

- Bible Study
- Prayer
- Scripture Memorization
- Personal Evangelism (we will talk about this on week 8)

**1. Bible Study:** Listening to God.

**Heb 4:12:** For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

**Josh 1:8:** This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **meditate** on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

**Psalms 1:2:** but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

When you read God's word, **meditate** on it!

- Set aside a place free from distractions (maybe loose the phone).
- Take your allotted devotional time and meditate on the scriptures for at least as much time as you spend reading them (for instance, if you read for 10 min, meditate for at least 10 min on what you've read).
- Ask God's Spirit to open your mind and heart to understand His Word.
- Make your reading personal. Pray to God: "Right now, I need you in my life." If you are reading Psalm 121, pray: "The Lord is **my** helper."
- Ask how this passage of Scripture points to Jesus Christ? (All roads in the Bible point to Jesus.)

Bible Reading Plans can be helpful (with Intentionality; Big Picture):

- If you read four chapters a day, you can read the Old Testament one time, the New Testament twice, and the Psalms several times in one year.



- If you read five psalms a day, you can read through the book of Psalms in one month (Psalm 1, 31, 61, 91, 121, etc.).

**Discussion:** What have you found helpful in Bible reading / meditation?

## 2. Prayer: Speaking with God.

Jesus led by example when it came to prayer:

- Jesus devoted himself to prayer all night before choosing His disciples.
- Jesus usually secluded Himself from others when He prayed. (Prayer > Action)
  - **Luke 5:16:** But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.
- Jesus fought temptation through prayer.
  - **Luke 22:** And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.
- Jesus recognized that the power for ministry comes through prayer, alone with God.

One Model for Prayer: **ACTS**

- **Adoration** (Praising and Worshiping God)

**1 Chron 29:11** (a prayer of David): “Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all... And now we thank you, Our God, and praise your glorious name.”

- **Confession** (Viewing our Sin the way God Does, Asking Forgiveness)

**Psalm 32:5:** I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

**1 John 1:9:** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- **Thanksgiving** (Expressions of Gratitude)

**Phil 4:6:** do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication **with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known to God.

- **Supplication** (Prayer offered on behalf of Others and Ourselves)

**John 16:24:** Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

**1 Tim 2:1:** First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people...

But what if we are feeling dry in our prayer life? What if God’s presence seems distant?

- One Tip: Start with Thanksgiving
- Illustration of a rusted faucet.

**Discussion:** What have you found helpful in your prayer life?

Historically, Christians have **prayed through the Scriptures** as an act of devotion. This can really grow the way we pursue our relationship with God.

- Read through a section of Scripture (a paragraph, short psalm, or several verses), think about them for a moment, then **turn that Scripture back to God**.
- One helpful tool: Boa, Kenneth. *Face to Face: Praying the Scriptures for Intimate Worship*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.

### 3. Scripture Memorization:

**Psalm 119:11:** I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

When you memorize scripture, you now have it in your head and heart; it becomes part of your spiritual DNA:

- It makes it easier to hear from God.
- It makes it more difficult to stop listening to God.

**Discussion:** (Time Permitting): What Scriptures have you memorized that have changed your life? How has God used these verses to direct, grow, protect, and use you for His glory?

- Focus on memorizing specific verses for sharing Gospel (5 Points of the Gospel above).

The end result of Consistent Quiet Times / Spiritual Disciplines in our Lives:

**Gal 2:20:** I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

- **Final Note:** Growing in Christ through the spiritual disciplines should not take place in total isolation. Grow alongside other believers!

#### ***For Further Reading:***

Whitney, Donald. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2014.

- **Homework:** take one hour this week to spend time with God, and share personally with someone in this room next Monday about what the Lord showed you.

## Week 4 (Feb.26): **Spiritual Warfare / Victorious Living as Jesus Followers.**

**Big Idea:** Satan does not want Christians to be effective disciples or disciple-makers. Spiritual warfare is real. We need to recognize it, fight, and win.

**Key Verse: Eph 6:12-13:** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **withstand** in the evil day, and having done all, **to stand firm.**

**1 Peter 5:8-10:** “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. **Resist** him, **firm** in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.”

**James 4:6b-7:** “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves to God. **Resist** the devil, and he will flee from you.”

- It is **not a question of if, but when.** We will be attacked... We need to be prepared to stand firm against the devil and his minions... fight and win.
- We see the idea of standing our ground in all these verses: **Resistance is key.**
- **Wrestling:** not an artillery fight or an air dogfight – it is a close, personal fight...
- God has given us the weapons that we need for the fight:

### **The Armor of God:**

**Eph 6:13-17:** “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.**”

- It is a **complete set** – we need all of it to stand and prevail against the enemy on the evil day (the day of attack):
- The first five defensive pieces of armor are to protect specific areas in which Satan (and his forces) often attack Christians:

**1. vs. 14a:** “Stand therefore, having fastened on the **Belt of Truth,**”

- The belt held up the tunic, held the sword in place, and helped keep the breastplate fitted properly.
- When we give into lies, we trip up (lies to cover lies).
- Satan is the father of lies, he will tempt us to lie, and he tempts us with lies: “God can’t really love you after what you have done!”
- Remember that Jesus is the TRUTH:  
**John 14:6a:** “I am the way, **the truth,** and the life...”  
**John 8:32:** “and you will know **the truth,** and the truth will set you free.”
- So quote back to Satan in the evil day the truth of the Gospel... I am in Christ!

**2. vs. 14b:** And having put on the **Breastplate of Righteousness**,

- Integrity means not giving the enemy footholds or strongholds in our life.
- Living a life of truth... where our walk matches our talk.
- But ultimately, none of us have perfect integrity. We must be clothed in **His righteousness**.

**3. vs. 15:** And as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the **Gospel of Peace**.

- Satan will attack your peace with God, and peace with others.
- He will tell you there is no way God will accept you or could love you... (Or he will tell you: “You shouldn’t have to forgive *that*...”)
  - **Eph 2:14:** “**He (Christ) himself is our peace.**”
- Satan will also try to prevent you from sharing the Gospel of Peace... He doesn’t want your feet ready to take the gospel of peace to the world.
  - **Isaiah 52:7:** “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes **peace**, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”

**4. Vs. 16:** In all circumstances take up the **Shield of Faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

- We defend from Satan’s attacks with the shield of faith.
- Faith is how we maintain our firm position in battle – by our position in Christ:
  - **Gal 2:20:** I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- Faith is the channel for God’s power to flow through our lives.
- Are you struggling for faith in battle? Ask for more: “I believe, help my unbelief!”
- We fight and we live by faith: “The righteous shall live by faith” (**Hab. 2:4b**)

**5. Vs. 17a:** And take the **Helmet of Salvation**:

- Satan will attack your sense of Salvation: Keep that helmet on!
- Remind yourself of the truth:
  - **Eph 2:8-9:** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

**6. Vs. 17b:** And the **Sword of the Spirit**, which is the Word of God.

- The Sword of the Spirit – the Word of God is our offensive weapon.
- If Satan attacks you in a targeted area, study and quote Scripture relevant to that.
- Jesus quoted Scripture in His battle with Satan in the Wilderness – **Matt 4:1-11**.
- If you have a weakness towards sin in a certain area, memorize Scripture that will help you fight back and “pierce the temptation through.”
- In the moment of temptation (in the fight), speak the Word of God out loud.

## **The Big Picture:**

The MISSION of the church is to make disciples of all the nations (Matt 28:18-20), so therefore our overall posture as a worldwide church is OFFENSIVE. But our overall posture as individuals in spiritual warfare is DEFENSIVE – Standing your ground against the enemy. As Christians, we advance in our communities and around the world with the GOSPEL. But then Satan comes and attacks... our objective then is to STAND OUR GROUND, then to keep marching.

But in areas where we have spiritually given ground over time, Satan and his forces establish **strongholds** in our lives.

**Jim Logan:** “A stronghold is a mindset impregnated with hopelessness that causes me to accept as unchangeable something that I know is contrary to the will of God.”<sup>11</sup>

- A stronghold could be a habitual sin of **commission** that we don’t believe we can overcome, so we accept it (i.e. – patterns of lust, deceit, or anger).
  - **Eph 4:26-27:** Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.
- Or a stronghold could be a sinful pattern of **omission** that we come to accept will be the “norm” and somehow must be OK (i.e. – a lifestyle of not sharing our faith).

## **Reclaiming Surrendered Ground: “5 Steps to Freedom in Christ”**<sup>12</sup>

### **1. Genuine Repentance:**

**1 John 1:9:** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**2. Taking Back Ground:** “An open declaration to God that what I did was wrong,” then commanding “the enemy in the name and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to *leave...*”<sup>13</sup>

**Matt 4:10:** Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.”

**Acts 16:18:** And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And it came out that very hour. (CF with Acts 19:13-16.)

**3. Tearing Down Strongholds:** Confront and destroy Satan’s lies with God’s truth.

**2 Cor 10:3-4:** For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

---

<sup>11</sup> Jim Logan, *Reclaiming Surrendered Ground: Protecting Your Family from Spiritual Attacks* (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 34.

<sup>12</sup> Logan, *Reclaiming Surrendered Ground*, 38-42.

<sup>13</sup> Logan, *Reclaiming Surrendered Ground*, 40.

**4. Building Towers of Truth:** “A tower of truth is just what the name implies: reprogramming your mind with the truth about yourself, about God, and about Satan and his ways. Then, when the enemy comes with his intruding thoughts—lies, deceptions, and accusations—you can flee to the tower.”<sup>14</sup>

**Rom 12:2:** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

**5. Taking Thoughts Captive:**

**2 Cor 10:5:** We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ...

**Phil 4:8:** Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

- 2 Sirens to avoid with Spiritual Warfare: **Naturalism** and **Animism**.
- **Final Note:** Fight alongside other believers. Ask other Christians to help you through prayer, fellowship, accountability.

***For Further Reading:***

Logan, Jim. *Reclaiming Surrendered Ground: Protecting Your Family from Spiritual Attacks*. Chicago: Moody, 1995. (Esp. recommend Part 1: p. 13-42.)

Lewis, C.S. *The Screwtape Letters*. New York: Harper Collins, 2015.

Gurnall, William. *The Christian in Complete Armour*. Banner of Truth, 1991.

- **Homework:** Prayerfully ask God to help you select five people in your life who you believe do not yet have a relationship with God and begin praying for them – daily.

---

<sup>14</sup> Logan, *Reclaiming Surrendered Ground*, 41.

## **Part 2: “Making Disciples”**

True Christian discipleship flows from a relationship with God. It longs to bring others into this genuine and passionate relationship with Him so that they too may enjoy His glory and glorify Him with the worship of their lives. Following Jesus transforms people into disciples who are passionate about knowing God and making Him known to other people in their community and world.

## **Week 5 (Mar.5): Living for Intentional Discipleship (Praying daily for your 5)**

- Review of the first 4 Lessons – “Being Disciples”.
- Answer any Questions on Spiritual Warfare (from Week 4)

**Big Idea:** Each day we are battling for souls! Who are the five souls you will daily pray for?

**Key Verse: Eph 6:18-20:** praying at all times in the Spirit, with all **prayer** and **supplication**. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

**Rom 10:1:** Brothers, my heart's desire and **prayer** to God for them is that they may be saved.

**1 Tim 2:1:** First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people...

### **Small Group Discussions: Who are your Five?**

- We will **spend significant time together praying** for these people.
- As you pray, ask God to reveal to your mind and heart ways to spend time with these people and invite them deeper into your life so that you might share Christ with them.

**Class Discussion:** What are some practical ways we can seek to build relationships with our five? Such as:

- Joining together in a mutual hobby.
- Invitation into home for a meal or game night.
- Introduce other Christians into your time with unbelieving friends.

### ***For Further Reading:***

Hull, Bill. *Choose the Life: Exploring a Faith That Embraces Discipleship*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004.

- Homework: Prayerfully seek to transition a normal conversation this next week to the spiritual (it could be with one of your 5, or it could be with another Christian).



## Week 6 (Mar.12): Spiritual Conversations

**Big Idea:** Faithfully making disciples means we need to intentionally speak with others about Jesus. *We need to learn to bridge conversations from the “secular” to the “spiritual”.*

- **Class Discussion:** How did it go? What did you learn about transitioning conversations to the spiritual?
- **Class Exercise:** Divide into 5 groups; each group takes one text and discusses how it applies to our class theme today. Each group will have an opportunity to teach the rest of us.

**Col 4:5-6:** Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

**1 Peter 3:15:** but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect...

**2 Cor 5:20:21:** Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**Matt 5:14-16:** “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

**Heb 10:24-25:** And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

### **Class Discussion:**

- What are some of the reasons we do not talk about Jesus more with fellow Christians?
- What are some of the reasons we do not talk about Jesus more with non-Christians?
- What are some helpful strategies for “bridging” conversations to Christ with Christians?
- What are some helpful strategies for “bridging” conversations to Christ with non-Christians?

**Class Discussion:** What can we learn from the following passage about seizing opportunities for spiritual conversation?

**Neh 3:1-5:** In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence. And the king said to me, “Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of the heart.” Then I was very much afraid. I said to the king, “Let the king live forever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' graves, lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?” Then the king said to me, “What are you requesting?” So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it.”

**Final Thoughts:** A great way to transition conversations to the spiritual, and to demonstrate to people that we genuinely care for them, is to ask permission to pray for them on the spot:

- Be sure to ask them about themselves. If they share about a trial they are going through, ask: “May I pray for you right now about this?”
- Follow up on how they are doing.
- **People should know we care for them; they are not projects.** Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in conversation. If you sense they are becoming withdrawn or defensive, don't try to force the conversation to the spiritual. Our goal is to speak to hearts.
- **Be prayerful, and ask God for opportunities.**

***For further reading:***

Pollock, Doug. *God Space: Where Spiritual Conversations Happen Naturally*. Group Publishing, 2009.

- **Homework:** over the next three weeks, host someone in your home that you have never hosted before with the aim of sharing Jesus with them.

Spring Break: *Two Sundays out of class to practice what we are learning!*  
**Week 7 (April 2): Christian Hospitality**

- **Class Discussion:** How did it go? Share with us some good stories about Christian hospitality from the last couple weeks.

**Big Idea:** “We should open up our homes as well as our hearts to others. To invite people to be part of our lives and/or families is an important demonstration of the gospel in action.”<sup>15</sup>

**Key Verse: Heb 13:2:** Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

**Gen 18:1-8:** And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth and said, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.” And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, “Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes.” And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

**Albert Mohler:** “We should show hospitality and love to strangers because, astoundingly, some of those strangers are angels. We often do not know with whom we’re visiting. This is something we need to keep in mind, though it should not motivate our love. We simply do not know who we’re really seeing when we notice a beggar on the side of the road, or a person in the hospital without a visitor, or someone in prison. The person we see **might not be who we think we are seeing.**”<sup>16</sup>

God has always cared about hospitality, and **expected His people to be hospitable:**  
**Lev 19:34:** You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

He lists hospitality as a **qualification for elders:**

---

<sup>15</sup> Will Metzger, *Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 157.

<sup>16</sup> Albert Mohler, *Exalting Jesus in Hebrews* (Nashville: B&H, 2017), 220.

**1 Tim 3:2:** Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, **hospitable**, able to teach...

**He makes hospitality a clear command for all Christians:**

**1 Pet 4:9:** Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

Jesus **modeled hospitality** for us:

**John 1:38-39:** Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come and you will see.” So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

**God is the ultimate example of Hospitality:**

- Bringing us into His family;
- Jesus said He is preparing a place in Heaven for us:
  - **John 14:2-3:** In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

**Examples of Hospitality changing Lives:**

**1. The story of Jean Valjean in Victor Hugo's Les Miserables (1862):**

- Hardened Criminal - After 19 years in prison he is released with a “yellow passport” - marking him as a former convict and making him an outcast wherever he goes.
- The kindly **Bishop Myriel** offers him hospitality; he gives him a warm meal, a clean bed to stay the night, but Valjean steals his silverware and silver plates in the middle of the night.
- Arrested by the authorities and dragged back to the bishop's door, Valjean faces a **horrible future in the 19<sup>th</sup> century French penal system** for his crime.
- But the bishop tells the police that **he gave the silver to Valjean**, and admonishes him for leaving behind a set of **silver candlesticks**. As he secures Valjean's release, Bishop Myriel tells Valjean that **he has purchased his soul for God with this silver**, and exhorts him to use this gift to become an honest man.
- Valjean's life is transformed by this act of grace from that of a hardened convict **to a man who devotes his life to serving God by caring for the downtrodden.**

**2. Rosaria Butterfield:** Wrote a book, titled: “**The Gospel Comes with a House Key: Practicing Radically Ordinary Hospitality in Our Post-Christian World.**”

- She was led to Christ through the hospitality of a pastor / family
- You really get to know someone in their home.

- I've found that is where people open up...

### 3. Examples of Hospitality from our Life Experience.

**Philoxenia** (love of strangers) is the opposite of **Xenophobia** (fear of strangers).

- Example of Open Heirs – young ladies walking into a church dressed like street folks.
- How would we treat them?
- In a Broken World – **Evangelism and Discipleship** is often tied to our level of Hospitality

**True hospitality** always includes welcoming people in from the “**outside**” to the “**inside**”:

- It might be welcoming someone into your home...
- But it might mean **welcoming an outsider** to your lunch table at school or work.
- **Loyal friendships start this way.**

#### Some examples of Hospitality:

- Fostering / Adopting ...bringing a child into your family...
- Caring for your neighbors (mow lawn, pressure wash, bringing over a plate of cookies), inviting them over...
- Bringing meals or even grocery shopping for the sick.
- Coming to church ready to have someone over for a meal...
- **Being intentional to talk** to people who are new or different from you...

When we step out of our comfort zone, and truly care for strangers: **Cool things happen!**

#### Class Discussion:

- What reasons do we have for not being more hospitable?
- What ideas do you have for using hospitality for evangelism and discipleship?

#### *For further reading:*

Butterfield, Rosaria. *The Gospel Comes with a House Key: Practicing Radically Ordinary Hospitality in Our Post-Christian World*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018.

- **Homework:** Review the Five Points of the Gospel (week 2), pray, and go share the Gospel with someone this week.
  - Be mindful that evangelism is a process of investing in someone's life to share the Good News, so make sure you have permission to speak to their heart and they sense that you care for their soul.

## Week 8 (April 9): Gospel Sharing

- **Class Discussion:** How did it go? Share with us some good stories about your gospel conversations.

**Key Verse: Rom 1:16:** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

**Big Idea:** “When you understand that evangelism isn’t converting people, but that it is telling them the wonderful truth about God, the great news about Jesus Christ, then obedience to the call to evangelize can become certain and joyful.”<sup>17</sup>

**J.I. Packer:** Evangelism, we have learned, is a task appointed to all God’s people everywhere. It is the task of communicating a message from the Creator to rebel mankind. The message begins with information and ends with invitation. The information concerns God’s work of making His Son a perfect Saviour for sinners. The invitation is God’s summons to mankind generally to come to the Saviour and find life.<sup>18</sup>

- Let’s Review The 5 Points of the Gospel:

### The Five Points of the Gospel:

#### 1. God **Made** You. *So He has ownership rights!*

**Gen 1:1:** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

**Psalms 139: 13:** For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

#### 2. You Have **Sinned** Against God. *The wages of sin is eternal death!*

**Rom 3:23:** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

**Rom 6:23a:** For the wages of sin is death,

**Rev 21:8:** “But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

#### 3. Jesus Christ **Died** for Your Sins, and **Rose** from the Dead. *Yes, He did!*

**Rom 5:8:** but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

---

<sup>17</sup> Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 136.

<sup>18</sup> J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 92.

**1 Cor 15:3-4:** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures...

**Acts 4:12:** “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

#### **4. You Can (Must) be Saved Through Faith in Christ! *Repent and Believe on Him!***

**John 3:16:** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

**Acts 3:19:** Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out...

**Rom 10:9:** because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

**Eph 2:8-9:** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

#### **5. You Must Now Live for Jesus! *He is Lord!***

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

**Gal 2:20:** I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

- **Review of Gospel-Sharing Tools:**

##### **The Romans Road:**

**Rom 1:20:** For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

**Rom 3:23:** For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

**Rom 6:23a:** For the wages of sin is death,

**Rom 6:23b:** but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Rom 5:8:** But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**Rom 10:9:** Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

**Rom 5:1:** Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Rom 8:1:** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

**Rom 8:38-39:** For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- **Review of Three Circles (time permitting)**

**Class Discussion:**

- What other evangelism tools have you found to be helpful and effective?
- What would help us develop more of a culture of Evangelism at Rocky?

**Mack Stiles:** “To be compelled by love to share the gospel individually is a beautiful thing, but when it happens in community, it’s joyfully glorious. The need to badger people to share their faith evaporates. It becomes something we long to do. It becomes a way of thinking.”<sup>19</sup>

**Stiles continues:** “I long for a church that understands that it—the local church—is the chosen and best method of evangelism... I long for a church where the greatest celebrations happen over those who share their faith, and the heroes are those who risk their reputations to evangelize.”<sup>20</sup>

**Final Note:** We need to think and pray about how we can better structure our time to reach our neighbors, co-workers, and non-Christian friends with the gospel.

***Further Reading:***

Packer, J.I. *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991.

- **Homework:** If possible, follow up with the person you shared the Gospel with last week.

---

<sup>19</sup> J. Mack Stiles, *Evangelism: How the Whole Church Speaks of Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 48.

<sup>20</sup> Stiles, *Evangelism*, 61.



## Week 9 (April 16): Going Deeper in Christian Relationships:

**Big Idea:** “One of the chief means by which we grow as disciples is through personal relationships in which we bring the truths of the gospel to bear on the details of life.”<sup>21</sup>

**Key Text: 2 Tim 2:2:** and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

- 2 Tim 2:2 provides a model for generational discipleship.
- Paul received the gospel from Christ, and he carefully passed it on to Timothy—through **word** and **example**—as they lived together, ministered together, traveled together, suffered together, adventured together, and experienced God’s deliverance and grace together.
- As Paul faces his death, he instructs his “number 1” disciple to follow his example, and to faithfully disciple others, who will in turn faithfully disciple others.

**Class Discussion:** on Walking together as we follow Jesus...Being Real, but Staying True to the Bible together....

**2 Tim 3:16-17:** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

**Mark Dever:** “Discipling is a form of mutual love. There is something of a teacher-student relationship. But there will also be peer-to-peer mutuality and love, such that the discipling often goes both ways.”<sup>22</sup>

What is clearly important is that Christians commit to building intimate, personal relationships with neighbors and friends that will lead to authentic discipleship.

- American Christians tend to think of discipleship as going through a training curriculum during a set time. But:
- **Robert Coleman** explains how “having called his men, Jesus made a practice of being with them. This was the essence of his training program—just letting his disciples follow him.”<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Bobby Jamieson, *Growing One Another: Discipleship in the Church*, Healthy Church Study Guides (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 31.

<sup>22</sup> Mark Dever, *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 40.

<sup>23</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism and Discipleship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), 41.

- Jesus' approach was more organic: "Knowledge was gained by association before it was understood by explanation... One living sermon is worth a hundred explanations."<sup>24</sup>

**David Platt:** "Making disciples is not an easy process. It is trying. It is messy. It is slow, tedious, even painful at times. It is all these things because it is relational. Jesus has not given us an effortless, step-by-step formula for impacting nations for his glory. He has given us people, and he has said, 'Live for them. Love them, serve them, and lead them. Lead them to follow me, and lead them to lead others to follow me. In the process you will multiply the gospel to the ends of the earth.'"<sup>25</sup>

Christ designed the process of disciple-making to help not only the person being disciplined grow in Christ, but for the disciple-maker to grow in Christ:

- David Platt writes, "In order to teach someone else how to pray, we need to know how to pray. In order to help someone else learn how to study the Bible, we need to be active in studying the Bible. But this is the beauty of making disciples. When we take responsibility for helping others grow in Christ, it automatically takes our own relationship with Christ to a new level."<sup>26</sup>
- This includes what he calls "listening to reproduce." Discipleship will reduce mind-drifting and sleeping in church!
- Platt writes, "When we realize we have the responsibility to teach the Word, it changes everything about how we hear the Word."<sup>27</sup>

**Relationships marked by genuine, biblical Encouragement:** it is important to forge meaningful Christian relationships with other believers that we might "bear one another's burdens" and "lift up" each other.

**Gal 6:2:** Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

**Ecc 4:10:** For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!

### **Small Group Class Discussion: Vulnerability and Accountability**

- How can we build discipleship relationships that truly are marked by vulnerability and accountability, where we confess sins to one another (James 5:16) and encourage one another in our Christ-following? Think of Scriptures as you discuss.

---

<sup>24</sup> Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism and Discipleship*, 42.

<sup>25</sup> David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from The American Dream* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2010), 93.

<sup>26</sup> Platt, *Radical*, 101.

<sup>27</sup> Platt, *Radical*, 101.

- How can we better do this in the context of Life Groups, Adult Bible Fellowships, and small groups like Quads?

***Further Reading:***

Bobby Jamieson, *Growing One Another: Discipleship in the Church*, Healthy Church Study Guides (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012)

Leroy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978).

Platt, David. *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from The American Dream*. Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2010.

- **Homework:** Pray about inviting someone into a discipleship relationship.

## Week 10 (April 23): Taking the Next Step into Discipleship...

**Big Idea:** Who is Your One? Who will you help, and be helped by, in following Jesus?

**Discussion:** Members share about discipleship commitments.

**Key Text: 2 Tim 2:1-3:** You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. **Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.**

**Final Challenge:** As you follow Christ in Discipleship, you might experience a share of suffering (you will also experience joy!) Don't let suffering stop you!

**John Piper** takes God's purposes in suffering a step further, arguing that the Christian's suffering actually helps in the mission of making Christ known:

“Christianity is not a life that one would embrace as abundant and satisfying without the hope of fellowship with Christ in the resurrection. And what we have seen is that this embracing of suffering is not just an accomplishment of our witness to Christ, it is the visible expression of it. Our sufferings make Christ's sufferings known, so that people can see the kind of love Christ offers...The startling implication of this is that the saving purposes of Christ among the nations and in our neighborhoods will not be accomplished unless Christians choose to suffer.”<sup>28</sup>

### **Discussion on The Endgame of our Discipleship Relationships:**

**Eph 4:11-14:** And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, **for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

- What does Christian maturity look like?
- **John Stott:** “Truth becomes hard if it is not softened by love; love becomes soft if it is not strengthened by truth.”<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1996), 231.

<sup>29</sup> John R.W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, *The Bible Speaks Today* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1979), 172.

**Review of Discipleship Resources** that you can use in one-on-one discipleship relationships, or in small groups:

- Ogden, Greg. *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2018.
- Irving, Mark. *FOLLOW: The Journey of a Lifetime*. Franklin, TN: Self-Published, 2021.
- Masterlife
- Navigators 2:7 Series

**Closing Time of Prayer Together for Further Discipleship**

## APPENDIX 2

### TRAINING CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

The elders of RBBC used this rubric to evaluate the training materials I developed, titled “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker.” These materials were taught to thirty church members over a course of ten weeks.

Name of Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<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>
<b>Biblical Accuracy</b>					
Each lesson was sound in its interpretation of Scripture.					
Each lesson was faithful to the theology of the Bible.					
<b>Scope</b>					
The content of the curriculum sufficiently covers each issue it is designed to address.					
The curriculum sufficiently covers the topic of biblical discipleship for time allotted.					
<b>Pedagogy</b>					
Each lesson was clear, containing a big idea.					
Each lesson provides opportunities for participant interaction with the material.					
<b>Practicality</b>					
The curriculum clearly details how to grow in the practice of disciple-making.					
At the end of the course, participants should be able to better make disciples.					

Other Comments:

APPENDIX 3  
DISCIPLESHIP PRACTICES INVENTORY (DPI)<sup>1</sup>

This DPI was used to help assess the current practice of disciple-making among key members of RBBC before the start of the disciple-making training. It was also administered one month after completion of the training course to help assess the effectiveness of the project.

---

<sup>1</sup> These survey questions were adapted from Justin Thomas Abercrombie, “Equipping Members of Center Ridge Baptist Church in Ariton, Alabama, to be Intentional Disciple-Makers” (DMin project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019), appendix 1.



Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## DISCIPLESHIP PRACTICES INVENTORY

### Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to help assess the practice of discipleship at Rocky Bayou Baptist Church. This research is being conducted by Troy Hamilton as part of his Doctor of Ministry program. In this research, you will answer twenty questions that take inventory of your current personal practice of discipleship. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this discipleship practices inventory, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

**Directions:** Please mark the appropriate answer. Some questions may ask you to give your opinion using the following scale:

- 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 understand what it means to be a disciple of Christ.						
2. I read the Bible daily.						
3. I have a consistent daily quiet time/devotion.						
4. I know how to study the Bible.						
5. I have a consistent prayer life.						
6. I am aware of God's presence in my life.						
7. I regularly pray for the salvation of specific people.						
8. I am intentional in my relationships with unbelievers.						

<b>Question</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>DS</b>	<b>AS</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
9. I have memorized strategic biblical texts to use in sharing my faith.						
10. I can clearly explain the gospel to an unbeliever.						
11. I can clearly explain to an unbeliever how to be saved.						
12. Using Scripture, I can lead another person to faith in Christ.						
13. I am comfortable sharing my faith with unbelievers.						
14. I look for opportunities in my daily life to share my faith.						
15. I consider personal accountability with another believer important for my spiritual growth.						
16. I can explain what it means to make a disciple.						
17. I have a person in my life who disciples me.						
18. I feel equipped to disciple a new believer.						
19. I am capable of training others to be stronger believers.						
20. I am currently discipling another believer.						

#### APPENDIX 4

#### SERMON NOTES FROM JANUARY 8 AND JANUARY 15, 2023

These two Sunday sermons continued our expositional study of John, presented to the church our theme for the year of discipleship, and informed the congregation of the upcoming class, “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker.”

**Sunday, Jan. 8, 2023:**

**John 1:35-42:** Knowing Him + **Making Him Known** = Discipleship

**Intro: (Slides)** Theme for year... Knowing Him + **Making Him Known** = Discipleship.

- Discuss symbiotic relationship with arrows...
- Today our text focusses more on the last part... but I hope you will see that Making Christ known deepens our relationship with Him.

We were designed to **Know Him and to Make Him Known.**

Illustration: show pictures of **2 lakes**

**Dead Sea** – Water Comes in from the Jordan, but it doesn't come out. No outlet.

- Fresh water evaporates in the desert heat...
- Lake becomes a Dead Pool, 34% salt (10% that of sea water), no fish
- This is what will happen to your heart if you **“Know a lot about Jesus / the Bible, but are not sharing Him with anyone.”**

**Lake Mead** – Water entry from Colorado River (right now the lake is at 30 percent capacity):

- More water going Out than coming in; **It is Drying Up....**
- This is what will happen to your heart if you “Try to give away what you don't have”...
- Discipleship / Christian Service in our own Strength...
- Ironically, Lake Mead could also become a Dead Pool if it drains too low... where you wouldn't want to drink the water.

**NOTE all the verbs in our short text that denote *movement*:**

- Vs. 37: followed,
- 38: following / seeking,
- 39: come and see,
- 40: followed
- 41: found 2x
- 42 :brought

***The water is supposed to be moving!***

This morning, we have two main points: Making Christ known is our **responsibility**, and making Christ known makes an **eternal difference!**

## 1. Making Christ known is our Responsibility. Vs. 35-37

**A. John the Baptist understood that was His Mission.** To point people to Christ!

**Vs. 35-36:** The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “**Behold, the Lamb of God!**”

John’s Jewish hearers would have immediately thought of references to **the sacrificial lamb** in the Old Testament:

- They likely thought of the **Passover lamb**, whose blood marked their home as belonging to Yahwey and saved their firstborn from the Angel of Death.
- Their minds probably ran to the story of **Abraham and Isaac at Mt. Moriah**. As they climbed that mountain on a dreaded mission, Isaac unaware that his father was about the face **the test of a lifetime...** to sacrifice him to God:

**Gen 22:7-8:** And Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” Abraham said, “**God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.**” So they went both of them together.

- You remember the story – Just as Abraham raised the knife, God indeed provided a sacrificial lamb in Isaac’s place.

Some of John’s hearers might have remembered the **Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 53:**

**Isaiah 53:6-7:** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

- Let us never forget, or minimize the importance of the Atonement! The bloody sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- That is what our sin demands. This is what John meant when he pointed to Jesus and said that He was the Lamb of God, **who takes away the sin of the world.**
- Let’s not dumb down the Gospel to make it more palatable for modern ears.

Now... This next verse is very important! Let’s not skip over it!

**Vs. 37:** The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

Two important things I see in this verse:

**1. John endorsed Jesus,** and his two disciples who knew him trusted his word and followed Jesus.

- You might think: who am I to witness / endorse Jesus? Wouldn't a pastor be better at that?
- Actually, those who know you will trust your word more, if they can tell you really believe it.

**2. John believed it! He was smitten with Jesus!**

- His witness for Christ came at the cost of the loss of some of his personal following and influence. His crowd got smaller!
- I look at the church in America and wonder if we are really smitten with Jesus, or are we about our own crowd size and power? Are we willing to send our best folks and our money to the M field?
- Are we in the disciple-making business or the business of spiritual consumerism? (Even Reformed Churches – Intellectualism).

**B. We need to understand that is OUR Mission.** To point people to Christ!

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

**John MacArthur:** “Every Christian is a disciple. In fact, the Lord’s Great Commission was to go into all the world and ‘make disciples... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you’ (Matt. 28:19-20). That means that the mission of the church and the goal of evangelism is to make disciples.”

**INVITE to RFN tonight** – What is Discipleship? **What is it Not?**

- Maybe it is a lot cooler and more encouraging than you think!
- Talk a little about “**Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker**” class. (Being / Making Disciples)
- We talk about transitioning conversations / hospitality, go out and do it.

This leads to our second main point:

## 2. Making Christ Known Makes an Eternal Difference! Vs. 38-42.

- Do you want to make a difference with your life?
- Get excited about Discipleship!

I see **three important things** about discipleship in this story:

### A. Discipleship means Relationship.

**Vs. 38-39:** Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come and you will see.” So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

- Tenth hour was 4:00 PM; **they wanted to spend time with Jesus...**
- Andrew sure got that opportunity over the next three years!
- Discipleship includes **experiencing life together**, not just **Knowledge Dissemination**.
- Discipleship includes Living by Example:

**Robert Coleman:** “One living sermon is worth a hundred explanations.”

Since discipleship must happen not in a vacuum, but in the course of living life together, it must include **intentional and even sacrificial hospitality**.

**Will Metzger** writes: “We should open up our homes as well as our hearts to others. To invite people to be part of our lives and/or families is an important demonstration of the gospel in action.”

- And let’s remember not to just think about inviting people in who are just like us...
- Jesus called a diverse lot to be His disciples!

**Effective personal discipleship** happens when you have two things: a Personal Relationship and God’s Word:

**Bobby Jamieson wrote a great booklet on Discipleship:** “One of the chief means by which we grow as disciples is through personal relationships in which we bring the truths of the gospel to bear on the details of life.”

Discipleship isn’t just going through a manual:

**David Platt:** “Making disciples is not an easy process. It is trying. It is messy. It is slow, tedious, even painful at times. It is all these things because it is **relational**. Jesus has not given us an **effortless, step-by-step formula** for impacting nations for his glory. He has given us people, and he has said, ‘Live for them. Love them, serve them, and lead them. Lead them to follow me, and **lead them to lead others to follow me**. In the process you will multiply the gospel to the ends of the earth.’”

- We see that right here in our story today:

### **B. Discipleship creates Multiplication.**

**Vs. 40-42a:** One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have **found** the Messiah” (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus.

- The word found here doesn't mean “stumbled upon”. It implies a **search** has been going on:

**Matth 13:44:** “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man **found** and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”

By the end of verse 42, **John had helped Andrew** follow Jesus, and **Andrew had brought Peter** to Jesus.

- That is three “generations” of discipleship in eight verses.

I'm reminded of the command to young Timothy:

**2 Tim 2:1-2:** You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses **entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also**.

Third thing about discipleship in this story:

### **C. Discipleship changes Lives. For Eternity:**

- John had pointed his disciples to Jesus, and his witness changed their lives. They went from following John to following Jesus.
- And now John's disciple Andrew brings his brother Simon to Jesus... here we see the beginning of Peter's life transformation:



**Vs. 42b:** Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter).

- Cephas means “Rock” in Aramaic
- A Name change in the Bible signifies **calling**...
- Jesus had some **big plans** for Peter’s life. It wasn’t going to be comfortable, and it wasn’t going to be easy for him – not even at the end - but God was going to use him to **change the world!**

**Matt 16:15-18:** He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

- Jesus discipled a rough fisherman to become a world-changer!
  - ABF 2 beginning 1 Peter. Notice the difference...
- A normal Joe shared the Gospel with Billy Graham.
- Maybe God will use you to bring your neighbor to Jesus, and maybe she will become a great Christian writer, or a missionary.

**Closing: At our recent elder retreat, we discussed Building a Culture of Discipleship...**

- **Bring Book...** Show it to the Church

**Mack Stiles** discusses building a culture of evangelism in our local churches, reflecting, “To be compelled by love to share the gospel individually is a beautiful thing, but when it happens in community, it’s joyfully glorious. The need to badger people to share their faith evaporates. **It becomes something we long to do.** It becomes **a way of thinking**....I long for a church that understands that it—the local church—is the chosen and best method of evangelism... I long for a church where the greatest celebrations happen over those who share their faith, and **the heroes are those who risk their reputations to evangelize.**”

- Will you be that, church? A church known for a culture of evangelism and discipleship?

**Closing Prayer**

**Communion**

**Sunday, Jan. 15, 2023**

**John 1:43-51: Knowing Him + Making Him Known = Discipleship**

**INTRO:** Review theme for year with Slides...

- Can't give away what you don't have!
- Today we will emphasize the Knowing Him aspect of D-ship!

Story of **Hiking in Wanoland** (5 years ago) along river... for a moment I realized I was lost:

- Relieved to see several more Wano...I followed them.
- Imagine if you were in a similar situation – **Antarctica** – got off the boat, journeyed a little too far from the party.... storm – lost forever – through the snow you see Ernest Shackleton – he says **“follow me!”**
- Or imagine you are in a **N Africa in WW2 – sandstorm...** machine-gun fire all around you, you are wandering around lost, suddenly Captain America grabs you by the rucksack, and says: **“Follow Me!”**

This was Philip's experience...

### **1. Disciples Follow Jesus. Vs. 43**

**Vs. 43:** The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He **found** Philip and said to him, **“Follow me.”**

- Note that Jesus took the initiative here... He found Philip and spoke **two words** that changed Philip's life!

### **“FOLLOW ME.”**

- The call of Jesus Christ to discipleship is a call to follow Him.
- A disciple – by definition – is **a follower, a learner**.
- Following Jesus means that you seek to learn from him, to do it as he did it.
- It also means to **Go ALL IN** – For Him to be Lord of your life...
  - Share brief testimony of **following Him with my future / vocation**.
- Worthy things are worth sacrificing for.
- Then you find out that long-term, it's no sacrifice!

- But Some disciples in the Middle East and Asia sacrifice their future and their freedom to follow Jesus.
- Jesus is worthy of following!

## 2. Disciples Bring Others to Jesus. Vs. 44-45

- Part of the call is to bring others into relationship.
- And this is natural. When you have found something worthy, you share!

**Vs. 44-45:** Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

- Bethsaida: “House of fishing”. Like Andrew and Peter, Philip was likely a fisherman.
- He sought out his friend Nathaniel and told him the good news...

Philip **found** Nathanael and said to him, “We have **found** him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

- The word “**found**” is used here twice, but it was first used in **verse 43**... Jesus found Philip.

**Augustine:** “We could not even have begun to seek for God unless He already found us.”

- **God’s initiative** in our salvation... Jesus told His disciples:

**John 15:16:** You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

- Some of the most important fruit that disciples bear is the souls of their friends that they bring to Jesus.

## 3. Disciples Come to See Jesus in His Glory. Vs. 46-51

- But it might take some time... it is a process...
- Nathanael wasn’t sold right away by Philip’s witness:

**Vs. 46a:** Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

- This was a straight-shooting man, and he knew the law and the prophets.
- Nowhere was it written that the Messiah would come from Nazareth.

- The Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem...
- Plus there may have been a little rivalry between Bethsaida and Nazareth...
- I love Philip's confident response:

**Vs. 46b:** Philip said to him, “**Come and see.**”

**Vs. 47:** Jesus **saw** Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!”

- Nathaniel was a sincere man, unlike Jacob the deceiver.

**Vs. 48:** Nathanael said to him, “**How do you know me?**” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, **I saw you.**”

- Scholars have long debated about the meaning of the **fig tree**... some suggest it is a symbol for a home or for peace.
- I think it is a **fig tree** and **Something personal and powerful had happened under that fig tree**...
- Talk about depiction from “**The Chosen**”: Nathaniel had come to the end of himself and cried out to God from under the fig tree... “Help me in my distress!... Do you see me?!”

**Application:** Jesus looked into Nathanael's soul. He saw him. And he sees you and me. He knows our heart!

I find this scary and beautiful at the same time...

- **Scary** because I know my heart is not always pure. (He sees us all the time...)
- **Beautiful** because I want to be known.
- Have you ever played hide and seek? As much fun as it was finding a great hiding place, after a while it got old being curled up under (or inside!) a piece of furniture. We want to be found. **We want to be seen.**

Skeptical Nathanael was immediately convinced and converted:

**Vs. 49:** Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

- Philip had told him that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of Joseph... a Carpenter;

- Nathanael cries out in faith: You are the **Son of God**... the Almighty, the King of Creation!
- He uses the glorious title: “The King of Israel” – The Promised One... and he, before most others, realized that **He was Divine!**

**Vs. 50:** Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, ‘**I saw you** under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will **see greater things** than these.”

**Greater things than these...** he sure would! He would see **a shadow of heaven** as he followed Jesus for the next three years.

He would not be disappointed. We are often disappointed because of the law of **diminishing returns**:

- A bowl of ice cream or a Chinese buffet...
- A resort... day 5 just isn't as magical as hour one...

I hope you are excited about your relationship with Jesus and your eternity in heaven... It has **Increasing Returns!**

- There have been a few masters of landscaping design who have pulled this off:
  - Bok Tower Gardens, Biltmore Gardens – anticipating, increasing beauty...
  - But it is Temporal... you get to the structure, and that is it.
- The Kingdom of God has **Increasing Returns** for eternity...

**Kent Hughes:** He is infinite, and his infinite love will unfold for eternity. We will always be surprised and will keep growing into new knowledge of His love. His power, his mercy, his strength, his transcendence – all these things will keep unfolding for eternity.”

Jesus didn't just leave things vague with “you will see greater things”... He continued:

**Vs. 51:** And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **you will see heaven** opened, and the **angels of God** ascending and descending on **the Son of Man.**”

- Jesus' first use of “Son of Man”: powerful OT reference to the Messiah...

**Daniel 7:13:** “I saw in the night visions and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.”

**But where does the Bible talk about Philip (or any disciple) seeing heaven opened and the angels ascending and descending on Jesus?**

- Transfiguration? Philip wasn't there.
- Ascention? Jesus rose in the air, Luke tells us in Acts 1:11 that two angels gave the disciples a little after action briefing, but this isn't the grand picture Jesus describes.

Well, Maybe Nathaniel had been reading **Gen. 28**. **This is a reference to the story of Jacob's Ladder two thousand years earlier:**

**Gen 28:10-13a:** Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep.

- Remember Jacob had tricked Esau and had stolen his birthright.
- He's on the run for his life... 43 miles through the wilderness in a day: fast and light and totally exhausted!

And he dreamed, and behold, **there was a ladder set up on the earth**, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the **angels of God were ascending and descending on it!** And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac..."

- God was letting the scoundrel Jacob know that he wasn't alone... He was going to be with him.
- This was Jesus' message to Nathanael... I saw you! You will see amazing things!
- Angels ascending and descending!

Sidenote here: We **American Naturalists** need to be reminded that the **Spiritual Dimension is Real!** Angels are real and are involved in our lives more than we realize:

**Heb 1:14:** Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

In Christ, we Christians have spiritually arrived at Mount Zion:

**Heb 12:22-23:** But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to

the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect...

**But the Main Point here in this reference to Genesis 28 is that the ladder in Jacob's vision in Christ. Jesus is the ladder between God and Mankind.**

**Hughes** summarizes the meaning here: "Nathanael, you have not seen anything! As you enter into the fullness of your relationship with me, and as your spiritual vision is broadened, you are going to see swarming angels and hear the rustle of their wings as they move on that ladder between Heaven and earth for you."

Jesus connects us to the divine. He Reveals God's plan to us. He makes our hearts clean so that we can know God.

Are you a Christ follower? Would you like to learn more about being one, and helping others follow Jesus?

Let me invite you to consider joining a class that I'll be teaching during the ABF hour starting next month about being and making disciples. **It is called "Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker"**.

- Tell everyone this is a project for my doctorate: explain why I chose discipleship.
- If interested, send me an email...

The class will run for 10 weeks (taking off the two Sundays surrounding Spring break) We ask:

1. You try to attend as many as possible (at least 8 of the 10) and
2. you be ready to give away what you learn.

### **Part 1: Being a Disciple**

Week 1 (Feb.5): Intro, What is Discipleship?, Discipleship Practices Inventory.

Week 2 (Feb.12): What is the Gospel?

Week 3 (Feb.19): Spiritual Disciplines (personal Bible reading, memorization, prayer).

Week 4 (Feb.26): Spiritual Warfare / Victorious Living as Jesus Followers.

## Part 2: Making Disciples

- Week 5 (Mar.5): Living for Intentional Discipleship (Praying daily for your 5)
- Week 6 (Mar.12): Spiritual Conversations (*bridging from the “secular” to the “sacred”*)
- Spring Break *Two Sundays out of class to practice what we are learning!*
- Week 7 (April 2): Hospitality
- Week 8 (April 9): Gospel Sharing
- Week 9 (April 16): Going Deeper in Christian Relationships: Vulnerability / Accountability
- Week 10 (April 23): Taking the Next Step into Discipleship (Resources, Who is your One?)

### Conclusion:

You may not realize it, but if you aren't following Jesus, you are lost.

If you have been trying to captain your own boat, be your own guide on your spiritual walkabout through life, YOU ARE LOST!

This world is NOT safe. We are in a spiritual war zone. There are angels and there are demons that want to destroy us.... in our culture there is much demonic temptation towards materialism and hedonism... it ends in Death!

But Jesus is a worthy captain! **Follow Him!**

Respond like Nathaniel: “You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

He will get you through the battle fog, and bring you home!

### PRAYER



## APPENDIX 5

### PROMOTIONAL FLYER FOR DISCIPLESHIP COURSE

We handed this flyer out to about 230 church members who attended the January “Rocky Family Night” service.

## “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker”

10 Week Class about Being and Making Disciples of Jesus Christ (Feb 5-Apr 23)

- Led by Troy Hamilton, meeting during ABF hour...
- Class Size: limited to 20 adults,
- 10 Weeks that could change your life, and that of others-for eternity.

We are looking for 20 people who will commit to doing their best to attend all classes and to not only take in, but to give away, all they learn.

- *For instance, when we learn about effectively sharing the Gospel, prayerfully plan to go do it that week!*
- We plan to begin class on Feb. 5, go 6 weeks, take 2 weeks off for Spring break, then conclude with the 4 Sundays in April:

### Part 1: Being a Disciple

- Week 1 (Feb.5): Course Intro / Overview, What is Discipleship?
- Week 2 (Feb.12): What is the Gospel? Discipleship Practices Inventory.
- Week 3 (Feb.19): Spiritual Disciplines (personal Bible reading, memorization, prayer).
- Week 4 (Feb.26): Spiritual Warfare / Victorious Living as Jesus Followers.

### Part 2: Making Disciples

- Week 5 (Mar.5): Living for Intentional Discipleship (Praying daily for your 5)
- Week 6 (Mar.12): Spiritual Conversations (*bridging from the “secular” to the “sacred”*)
- Spring Break *Two Sundays out of class to practice what we are learning!*
- Week 7 (April 2): Hospitality
- Week 8 (April 9): Gospel Sharing
- Week 9 (April 16): Going Deeper in Christian Relationships: Vulnerability / Accountability
- Week 10 (April 23): Taking the Next Step into Discipleship (Resources, Who is your One?)

## APPENDIX 6

### “THE FIVE POINTS OF THE GOSPEL”

This template for presenting the gospel was taught and referenced throughout the “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker” course. It was emphasized that this is not the only method for evangelism, but it is a helpful template to assist with conversations with unbelievers. Memorization of the supporting verses was encouraged to everyone in the class.

## The Five Points of the Gospel

### 1. God Made You. *So He has ownership rights!*

**Gen 1:1:** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

**Psalm 139: 13:** For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

### 2. You Have Sinned Against God. *The wages of sin is eternal death!*

**Rom 3:23:** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

**Rom 6:23a:** For the wages of sin is death,

**Rev 21:8:** “But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

### 3. Jesus Christ Died for Your Sins, and Rose from the Dead. *Yes, He did!*

**Rom 5:8:** but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**1 Cor 15:3-4:** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures...

**Acts 4:12:** “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

### 4. You Can (Must) be Saved Through Faith in Christ! *Repent and Believe on Him!*

**John 3:16:** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

**Acts 3:19:** Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out...

**Rom 10:9:** because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

**Eph 2:8-9:** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

### 5. You Must Now Live for Jesus! *He is Lord!*

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

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abercrombie, Justin Thomas. "Equipping Members of Center Ridge Baptist Church in Ariton, Alabama, to be Intentional Disciple-Makers." DMin project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019.
- Allison, Gregg R. *The Baker Compact Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016.
- Boa, Kenneth. *Face to Face: Praying the Scriptures for Intimate Worship*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
- Boice, James Montgomery. *Christ's Call to Discipleship*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York: Macmillan, 1975.
- Bredfeldt, Gary J. *Great Leader, Great Teacher: Recovering the Biblical Vision for Leadership*. Chicago: Moody Press, 2006.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.
- Butler, Trent C., ed. *Holman Bible Dictionary*. Nashville: Holman Bible, 1991.
- Butterfield, Rosaria. *The Gospel Comes with a House Key: Practicing Radically Ordinary Hospitality in Our Post-Christian World*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018.
- Carson, D. A. *Matthew*. In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 9, *Matthew and Mark*, edited by Frank E. Gaebelein, 23-670. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.
- Christensen, Duane L. *Deuteronomy 1:1-21:9*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 6A. Dallas: Word Books, 2001.
- Coleman, Robert E. *The Master Plan of Evangelism and Discipleship*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998.
- Craigie, Peter. *The Book of Deuteronomy*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976.
- Dever, Mark. *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004.
- Earle, Ralph. *2 Timothy*. In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, *Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1,2 Thessalonians, 1,2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, edited by Frank E. Gaebelein, 391-418. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.

- Eims, Leroy. *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.
- Estes, Daniel J. *Psalms 73-150: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*. New American Commentary, vol. 13b. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2019.
- Geiger, Eric, and Kevin Peck. *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development*. Nashville: B&H, 2016.
- Gilbert, Greg. *What Is the Gospel?* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.
- Goetsch, David. *Christians on the Job: Winning at Work without Compromising Your Faith*. Washington, DC: Salem Books, 2019.
- Goldingay, John. *Psalms*. Vol. 3, *Psalms 90-150*. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- Gurnall, William. *The Christian in Complete Armour*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1991.
- Hagner, Donald A. *Matthew 14-28*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33B. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.
- Hull, Bill. *Choose the Life: Exploring a Faith That Embraces Discipleship*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Disciple Making Church*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1990.
- Irving, Mark. *Follow: The Journey of a Lifetime*. Franklin, TN: self-published, 2021.
- Jamieson, Bobby. *Growing One Another: Discipleship in the Church*. Health Church Study Guides. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- Kalland, Earl S. *Deuteronomy*. In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, *Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and 1,2 Samuel*, edited by Frank E. Gaebelein, 3-235. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.
- Lewis, C. S. *The Screwtape Letters*. New York: HarperCollins, 2015.
- Lincoln, Andrew T. *Ephesians*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42. Dallas: Word Books, 1990.
- Logan, Jim. *Reclaiming Surrendered Ground: Protecting Your Family from Spiritual Attacks*. Chicago: Moody, 1995.
- MacArthur, John. *The Gospel According to Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- Merrill, Eugene H. *Deuteronomy*. New American Commentary, vol. 4. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994.
- Metzger, Will. *Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984.

- Mohler, R. Albert, Jr. *Exalting Jesus in Hebrews*. Nashville: B&H, 2017.
- Morris, Leon. *The Gospel According to Matthew*. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992.
- Nouwen, Henri. *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*. New York: Crossroads, 1989.
- Ogden, Greg. *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018.
- Packer, J. I. *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991.
- Piper, John. *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1996.
- Piper, John. *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995.
- Platt, David. *Follow Me: A Call to Die. A Call to Live*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2013.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream*. Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2010.
- Pollock, Doug. *God Space: Where Spiritual Conversations Happen Naturally*. Loveland, CO: Group, 2009.
- Stiles, J. Mack. *Evangelism: How the Whole Church Speaks of Jesus*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.
- Stott, John R. W. *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Message of 2 Timothy*. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Message of Ephesians*. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1979.
- Tate, Marvin E. *Psalms 51-100*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 20. Dallas: Word Books, 1990.
- Towner, Philip H. *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.
- Tripp, Paul. *Lead: 12 Gospel Principles for Leadership in the Church*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.
- VanGemeren, Willem A. *Psalms*. In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, *Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs*, edited by Frank E. Gaebelein, 1-882. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.

- Ware, Bruce. *The Man Christ Jesus: Theological Reflections on the Humanity of Christ*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.
- Weber, Stuart K. *Matthew*. Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 1. Nashville: B&H, 2000.
- Whitney, Donald. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2014.
- Wilder, Michael S., and Timothy Paul Jones. *The God Who Goes before You: Pastoral Leadership as Christ-Centered Followership*. Nashville: B&H, 2018.
- Willis, Avery T. Jr. *Masterlife—Book Set: A Biblical Process for Growing Disciples*. Nashville: Lifeway Press, 1997.
- Wood, Arthur Skevington. *Ephesians*. In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, *Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1,2 Thessalonians, 1,2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, edited by Frank E. Gaebelin, 1-92. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.



## ABSTRACT

### EQUIPPING DISCIPLE-MAKERS AT ROCKY BAYOU BAPTIST CHURCH IN NICEVILLE, FLORIDA

Troy Anthony Hamilton, DMin  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2023  
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Jeremy D. Jessen

This project seeks to raise up and equip disciple-makers at Rocky Bayou Baptist Church by teaching a ten-week discipleship training course entitled “Every Disciple a Disciple-Maker.” Chapter 1 examines the context and rationale behind the project and defines its purpose and goals. Chapter 2 exegetes Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 96:1-10, Matthew 28:18-20, Ephesians 4:11-6, and 2 Timothy 2:1-3, presenting biblical and theological reasons for why every disciple of Jesus must be a disciple-maker. Chapter 3 discusses what it will take for more members of RBBC to become disciple-makers. It considers the motivation of God’s glory, the task of following Jesus together in authentic relationships, and the potential cost of persecution. Chapter 4 describes the details of the project to raise up and equip more disciple-makers at RBBC. Chapter 5 evaluates the project’s purpose and goals, assesses its strengths and weaknesses, and concludes with theological and personal reflections.

## VITA

Troy Anthony Hamilton

### EDUCATION

BA, Cedarville University, 1995

MA, Columbia Biblical Seminary, 2000

MDiv, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020

### MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Missionary Apprentice, Bob Tebow Evangelistic Association, Mindanao, Philippines, 1995-1996

Missionary, Grace Missions, Nampula, Mozambique, 1996-1998

Director of Youth and Evangelism, Three Rivers Baptist Church, Irmo, South Carolina, 2000-2004

Career Missionary, International Mission Board, Central Asia, 2004-2016

Senior Pastor, Rocky Bayou Baptist Church, Niceville, Florida, 2016-