

Be and Make
January 31, 2010
Matthew 28:19

Today I have two things that I want you to walk out of here remembering. **#1: I am to be a disciple. #2: I am to make disciples.** If you don't remember anything else today please remember those two things. I am to be a disciple and I am to make disciples.

So what is a disciple? The word disciple comes from the Greek word *matheteuo* which means 1) to be a disciple of one 1a) to follow his precepts and instructions 2) to make a disciple 2a) to teach, instruct. If you are a disciple, then you learn everything you can about the person you are following and bend your life to be like them. Later we are going to look at the Great Commission, found in Matthew 28:19-20. The word *matheteuo* in is translated in the NIV as "disciple," but in the King James this word is translated teach. The same word has two connotations. You are the student or you are the teacher. There are points when we need to be both, we need to both be disciples and we need to make disciples.

Each of us is a disciple of something. Some of us study all that we can about a particular sport, player and team. We desire to know as much as possible about our favorite team, so that when the game comes we can talk about them, know what they will do next and know what results to expect. We tell everyone we can about that team and its players in order that they may share our enthusiasm for them. Some of us follow closely the moves of our favorite celebrities because what they say and do is important to us. We watch reality shows because we want to know what they do. We may or may not want to be like them, but we want to learn what they are going to do next so that we may follow them a little more closely. We learn how to hunt, cook, garden, and so many other things because we simply enjoy doing them. We know who the best are in a particular field and we learn how to do something just like they do because they were the best. We buy their cookware, wear their clothes, and learn their styles because they are the best and we want to be like them. We follow the team, watch the T.V. shows, wear the clothes, use the cookware, read the books, and search the internet because we want to be a part of them. We may not think of ourselves as their disciples, but that is what we are. Athletes begin to think like their coach because they have "bought into the system." We begin to think like the articles we read and the people we listen to.

There are so many things to follow that we get wrapped up in them all and sometimes forget about the one we are truly to follow. Remember, I am to be a disciple, but not just a disciple of anyone, a disciple of Jesus Christ. Discipleship to Jesus means that we bend who we are to follow Him. Too many church pews are filled with people who claim to be Christians, but aren't disciples.

In **Luke 14:25-27**, Jesus is dealing with crowds of people who want to follow Him and be His disciples, but it is mainly because He is the next big thing to come along. They enjoy His teaching, but really enjoy His miracles. They want to see what great thing He will do next.

Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ²⁶"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

At this point it was easy to follow Jesus, it hadn't cost anything. Now Jesus begins to count the cost. The word for hate here means hate. I looked it up, I couldn't get past it. Jesus really does say this. He is saying, put me first. Above everything else, Jesus goes first. Above your mother, father, spouse, children and even your own life - He is first.

The cross carried the connotation of death. There was no way to get around it. Jesus tells the crowd that to follow Him means dying to everything else. If you are going to follow Jesus He will be first in your life. We cannot claim to be a Christian without putting him on the throne of our life. Dallas Willard puts it this way ***"If you are on the throne of your life, you won't want to think about God because He is, after all, God, and there will not be room for both Him and anybody else on the throne of your life."*** To be His disciple is to put Him on the throne.

One of the ways that we put God on the throne is through scripture memorization. I am constantly excited about the amount of scripture that my son is asked to memorize through Awana, and programs like Upwards, and even in his schooling. Setting a solid foundation of scripture memorization is helping him to hide God's Word in His heart. In **Psalm 119:11**, David cries out to God as He states: ***"I have hidden your Word in my heart, that I might not sin against You."*** The natural byproduct of God's Word stored deep within us is that we are less prone to sin. When we know the Word of God we live by the Word of God. As excited as I am for Titus to memorize God's Word I am also convicted by my lack of purposeful memorization. Why is it that we push our children to memorize scripture, but we ourselves struggle to know it? Part of discipleship is to know the teaching of the one we are following.

Jesus calls His disciples to look different from the world. We reject the worldly mentality and put on the mentality of Jesus. How do we do this? In **Romans 12:1-2**, Paul writes, ***"¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."*** To follow God we are transformed from an old way of thinking into a new way of thinking. We leave behind selfishness and sinful desires to put on the desires of the Creator. Renewing of our mind happens as we spend more and more time in the Word of God and obey the teaching found therein. The more time we spend with Him, the more we become like Him.

One of the things I love about being part of the church is that we share life together, or at least we should. Friendships are formed not because of who we cheer for, or how much we make, or what we wear, but because we belong to Christ. I am thankful for many of these friendships over the years. I am thankful that God continues to provide these in my life. This week I was talking with my friend Jason about this topic of discipleship and asked him about his job. Jason is a plumber. As a plumber he had to go through an apprenticeship to be able to do his job.

From what I understand, his apprenticeship was required to take a minimum of 3 years. After three years he was able to take a test to be a certified plumber. He could stay an apprentice for a longer period of time to learn the trade better before taking the test, or he could take it after three years.

During the time of his apprenticeship Jason had to learn under someone else how to be a plumber. He went to job sites with that person, watched them work, did work and was watched to make sure he did it correctly and learned everything that he could about being a plumber. After two years he was sent on a few jobs on his own. Jason had to learn how to be a plumber from someone else in order to do it himself.

In the same way we have to be disciples so that we can learn about the one whom we follow. We need to make sure that there is someone in our life who can challenge us and ask us tough questions as we follow God. We need to be disciples in the word of God, but also have someone else helping us learn what it is to follow Him.

In **Matthew 28:19-20** we find what is referred to as the “Great Commission.” These are Jesus’ final words to his disciples while He was on the earth. *“¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

The first thing to remember is that I am to be a disciple. The second thing to remember is that I am to make disciples. It is very clear in these words that Jesus wants us to go and make disciples. This is the crux of the Great Commission. Every other thing hinges on making disciples. Going into the nations hinges on the purpose of making disciples there. Baptizing hinges on making disciples. Teaching others to obey everything Jesus commanded hinges on making disciples.

The overflow of our walk with Christ is that we should want others to share in this faith of ours and to tell them about Him as well. Making disciples should be the natural byproduct of being a disciple. In **1st Cor. 11:1**, Paul says, *“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”* Not only did Paul follow the example of Christ, but because of this He encouraged the church at Corinth to watch what he did closely. Paul was confident in his own following of Jesus and wanted others to follow as well. His life was lived as a man who wanted others to know what it was to follow Christ as well. He took Timothy, Titus, Philemon and others under his wing so that He could teach them how to follow Christ. He wrote letter after letter to churches to help them understand how to follow the example of Christ.

Turn to **Titus 2** with me for a few moments. This is one of my favorite passages of scripture. I love that within this chapter Paul is teaching Titus how to teach others.

¹You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. ²Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

³Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁴Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

⁶Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. ⁷In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness ⁸and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

Titus 2:1-8

First Paul explains to Titus that he must teach doctrine that is sound. He shouldn’t come up with his own ideas, but make sure that he is teaching correctly. Then he needs to help the

older men understand how to live. Next he is to teach the older women how to live so that they can train the younger women. Then he is to teach the younger men. Finally Titus is to do good and show integrity so that no one can say anything bad.

In 8 verses we see Paul teach another how to disciple others while at the same time being a disciple. We can learn from Paul's example. This is what Jesus commanded, to make disciples.

As Jason and I were talking about being an apprentice, or disciple, the question came up as to whether or not he would train someone after he had become certified. His reply was something to the effect of it being pretty much a requirement to apprentice someone else. After he learned, he taught.

I am to be a disciple and I am to make disciples. If I claim to be a Christ follower, then I am to live as a Christ follower. It's the same for you. If you claim it, then live it. As a disciple you follow and as a result you make more disciples. It's interesting that Matthew 28:19 is the only time in the book of Matthew that disciple is used in an active sense. The other two times are passive and refer to discipleship already taking place. Jesus commands his followers to bring more people to him through discipleship.

Within this church there are opportunities for you to be a constant student of the Word. We offer Sunday School classes, a Sunday night teaching time, Bible Studies and some small groups as opportunities for you to draw nearer to God. There are people who have lived this faith for a long time that can disciple you and challenge you in your faith. Discipleship must be a priority in your life.

You have the opportunity to make disciples all around you. By the way you live you are showing an example of who Christ is. Maybe it's time to be vocal about what God is doing in your life in simple conversations. We need to be disciples and we need to make disciples.

Do everything that you can to know the Word of God and to follow Him. Begin in the Gospels and start reading. As you read write down questions. As you question seek answers. As you get the answers put them into practice. Know and follow hard after God. There is no greater life to lead.