

10 Practical Reasons for Discipling

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MESSAGE INTRODUCTION:

[Insert your own story or use this one]

Recently a friend wrote an email to Dr. Mark Alan Williams asking if he had written anything about why we should disciple others.

He wrote: “we human, including Christian type, always ask - out loud or subconsciously –‘what is in it for me???’ or what benefit do I get from the action or offering you are making? Question for you, Mark - Have you made a list of the benefits of DOING discipleship; to both parties.”

He also wrote what prompted his question. He is “trying to get discipleship training going at the church. So what do you say to motivate people to get off the bench and take action?”

Mark immediately realized what a great question he is asking. So now I’ve thought about it and would like to answer:

To help with our motivation, here are...

I. 5 Reasons to be Discipled:

Do you want to be happy? Randy Alcorn warns,

“If we buy into the lie that happiness is to be found in wealth, beauty, fame, or any number of endless pursuits besides Christ, we’re doomed to unhappiness because we’re pursuing the wrong things.”¹

“To be truly happy a man must have sources of gladness which are not dependent on anything in this world.” —J. C. Ryle

Happiness is found in being a disciple of Jesus Christ (in the following ways)!

1. The joy of true fellowship.

¹Alcorn, Randy. *Seeing the Unseen*, Expanded Edition (p. 7). The Crown Publishing Group. Kindle Edition

One of the best parts of discipleship is the fact that you are creating relationships that go beyond surface deep. True fellowship is something we long for, but we don't know how to achieve it. Discipleship accomplishes that.

When we meet together, we:

- Share life together
- Study the Bible together
- Encourage each other
- Pray for each other

Doing these face-to-face allows us to achieve what we long for but often don't achieve or know how to achieve: true fellowship.

It's possible to walk in and out of church each week and never really get to know them because the time is so brief. An excellent way to know each other is to gather around the Word.

2. The joy of growing in Christlikeness.

If I ask myself the question, "When am I the happiest?" the answer is that I am happiest when I am like Jesus. I'm not talking about a "giddy" kind of happiness, but a serene, able to handle anything, at peace with the world kind of joy.

Conversely, when I am the unhappiest, it is because I am not following in the footsteps of Jesus. It's when I've...

- Become impatient
- Started complaining
- Been worried
- Said things I shouldn't have
- Lost my cool
- Envied

But the more I grow to be like Jesus, the more joyful I am. 2 Corinthians explains:

But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image. (2 Corinthians 3:16-18 NLT)

Recently after playing basketball, one of the guys said to me, “I wish I could be like you and just keep my mouth shut and not let things bother me when the game doesn’t go like I want.”

I appreciated the comment, but I’m not sure I deserved it. Not because it isn’t true, but because any positive traits are the Lord working in my life, not my own goodness. And growing in Christlikeness through the power of His Spirit feels good!

3. The joy of fulfilling your destiny.

It is awesome to have a destiny that we can fulfill because we are His disciples and growing in Him.

As it says in Ephesians: “For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” (Ephesians 2:10 NLT)

I’m so grateful that I am involved in something beyond pettiness, beyond triviality, beyond “eat, drink and be merry.”

“You satisfy me more than the richest feast. I will praise you with songs of joy” (Psalm 63:5 NLT)

Many people lack purpose, direction, meaning. But when we are discipled, not only are we fulfilled, but we begin a cycle of reproduction that can impact multitudes as disciples multiply disciples. Generation after generation can be affected by our discipleship! [It's a wonderful destiny to fulfill!](#)

4. The joy of getting your questions answered

Another great thing about discipleship is we get questions answered, especially about how our faith relates to our personal lives. Yes, we get Bible knowledge, but more importantly, we have godly examples to emulate.

Like the Apostle Paul wrote, “*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*” (1 Corinthians 11:1 NIV)

One of the men who discipled me was a missionary and evangelist named Floyd “Mac” McElveen. He was an amazing man of God and the most remarkable evangelist I ever met. He had over 2 million books in print. Although he died in 2014, many of his books are still available on the internet.

Mac answered my theological questions. But more importantly, he set an example for me through his incredible life and his dedication to sharing Jesus wherever he went. He was a dear friend and mentor to whom I am deeply grateful. (As are others who discipled me.)

There will never be another Mac. He was exceptional. But it doesn’t take a Mac to be a mentor. Most disciplers in my life have been regular Christians. They answered my questions and helped me understand what it meant to follow Jesus daily.

5. The joy of knowing how to disciple others.

You should be discipled for your sake but also so you know how to disciple others.

As Rick Warren famously began his book *The Purpose Driven Life*, “It’s not about you.”

Real joy comes when we share with others. So, when we’re discipled, it is to grow personally, but more importantly, it is so we can do the same for others.

“I could have no greater joy than to hear that my children are following the truth.” (3 John 1:4 NLT)

To this end, my next section is: “5 Reasons to be a Disciple-Maker.”

II. 5 Reasons to be a Disciple-Maker:

1. The joy of obeying Jesus.

Being a follower of Jesus means obeying Him, right? Hopefully, we can all agree on that.

And, if we’re not willing to obey Him, we should question if we are indeed His.

“By this, we can be sure that we have come to know Him: if we keep His commandments.” (1 John 2:3 Berean Study Bible)

One of Jesus' most fundamental instructions to us is “The Great Commission.” The one imperative in it is to “make disciples.”

NOT ON OUTLINE OR PP: The Great Commission

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18b-20 ESV)

Thus, you and I need to be thinking about and doing just that.

And as we think about and do it, we should also think about the fact that Jesus never tells us to do something to make us miserable. He instructs to do His will to create a sense of joy, fulfillment, purpose, meaning, direction, and so on. We experience the joy of doing His will.

2. The joy of doing what Jesus did.

How did Jesus spend His ministry time? The vast majority of it was spent in small discipling groups.

Naturally, we're impressed with the teaching of and then feeding of 5,000. But doing that was a small amount of Jesus' time, and frankly, it was likely some of the least impactful. Consider John 6:66; "At this point, many of his disciples turned away and deserted him." (NLT)

On the other hand, who "turned the world upside down?" (Acts 17:6) It was a relatively small group of disciples who were most impacted by Jesus, primarily the twelve disciples.

WWJD is a famous phrase for many. In case you missed it, it's an acronym for "What Would Jesus Do?" Many have worn bracelets with WWJD on them or had car bumper stickers with WWJD or coffee mugs.

It's a famous slogan, but to be more than just a slogan, to do what Jesus would do is to be a disciple-maker.

3. The joy of helping others grow spiritually.

[Insert your own story or use this one]

Recently, Carolyn and I (Mark Alan Williams) visited a church and saw a couple we haven't seen in perhaps 20 years. We chatted for a few minutes, and then as we were leaving, the husband unexpectedly said, "By the way, your ministry impacted our lives."

How did I feel when I heard that? I felt like the Apostle John who wrote, "I could have no greater joy than to hear that my children are following the truth." (3 John 1:4 NLT) (VERSE REPEATED)

Discipleship Journeys with Jesus has a huge vision. But in the end, the number is significant because the number represents individuals! It means individual lives touched by Jesus, real people saved, walking with Him, and reproducing more disciples.

4. The joy of growing by helping others grow spiritually

When we help others grow, we usually grow more than they do. It's funny how that works—maybe it's because we feel that we have a responsibility to know more, do more, apply more.

It's awesome!

And what's also great about disciple-making is that you don't have to be a:

- public speaker
- a Bible scholar
- a charismatic personality
- an up-and-comer

All you have to do is find someone who doesn't know as much as you do and begin to help them learn more! Or several people, like Jesus, did.

Then, as you begin to share with them, you begin to grow more than ever.

5. The joy of making life count.

Life is short! Who knows, this might be

- our last decade,
- our last year,
- our last month,
- our last week,
- or even our last day.

Maybe it is not any of these for you and me; however, there is a near 100% chance that it is our last century. And I'm old enough now to tell you that even a century goes by quickly!

Someone asked a great question, "What are you investing your one and only life in that will last for eternity?" Jesus said to do that! He said:

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-20 NIV)

Yes, Jesus was talking about money; however, an even more important resource is our time. How are we investing our time? Shouldn't we be investing your time in the Big Picture of what God is doing?

CONCLUSION:

Perhaps you're willing, but a big question is: "Can I do it?" The answer is, "Of course you can! Jesus never tells us to do something we cannot do!"

So, drop defenses such as:

- I don't know enough about the Bible
- I'm not smart enough
- I don't have answers
- I haven't studied the Bible enough
- I'm not spiritual enough

And don't say, "I don't know how." If you're saying, "I don't know how," you need to check out a tool we've created for you! It's called "Discipleship Journeys with Jesus."

Discipleship Journeys with Jesus (DJJ) ministry offers a free digital resource for discipling that makes it far easier to "make disciples." Thousands are being discipled using these studies based on biblical journeys with Jesus. You can join with them. Just go to www.djjministry.org and sign in.

How can you get started?

Here's a simple solution: Find just one person and ask them if they would study "Discipleship Journeys with Jesus" with you. That will give you a pattern to follow—you can meet and do one journey per week or whatever schedule works for you.

Or it could be more than one person. How many could it be? Here's the answer from the example of Jesus:

- Discipleship can be done in small groups, just like Jesus had a small group of The Twelve.
- Discipleship can be done in an even smaller group, just like Jesus had a smaller group of an inner circle: Peter, James, and John.

- Discipleship can be done one-on-one, just like Jesus had “The Beloved Disciple,” John.

So, from 2 to 12 works. Don’t get hung up on numbers.

And don’t get hung up on titles like who is the disciple and who is the discipler. Just ask someone, “Would you like to go on some discipleship journeys with Jesus with me? We’ll meet for about an hour each week, have some coffee or tea, and follow the journeys laid out online with [DJJ](#). ”

If they say “yes,” then off you go!

3 VERY EASY Steps:

1. Read the Bible
2. Read a question from the lesson
3. Answer the question from the Bible

Then obey what you’ve learned.

Furthermore, we’ve made Discipleship Journeys with Jesus as compelling as we know how to do!

It’s compelling:

- It’s free of charge!
- Each lesson includes two videos recorded on location in the Bible Lands. We did these so people can see the sites of the journeys.

The journeys are a clear pathway to Christian maturity.

Invitation:

Romans 10:9-10 (NIV)

“If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.”