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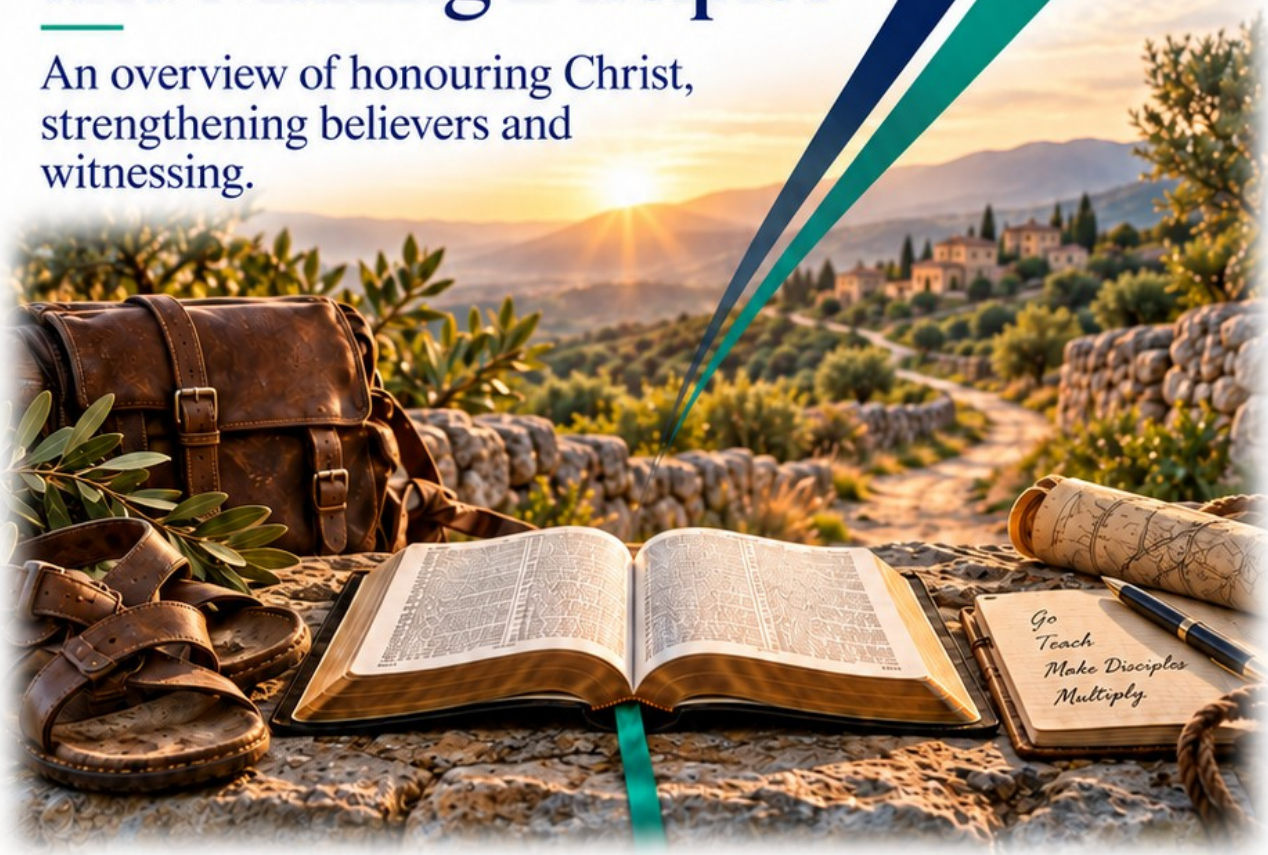
STUDY GUIDE 17

Foundations *of* Discipleship

STUDY GUIDE 6 OF 7:

Following Christ and Making Disciples

An overview of honouring Christ, strengthening believers and witnessing.



Equipping and empowering for effective service

2 Timothy 2:2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

My Study Plan

Preparing a Study Plan before starting this Study Guide will assist you in completing it within a designated timeframe. It also helps in developing the discipline required for studying God's Word effectively.

Proverbs 16:3:

> *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

My Study Guide Journal

Keep a record as you progress through your Study Guide, including the Personal Responses for each section, for future reference and goal setting.

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Important Points

- COGMA does not claim to be infallible or the authority.
- Infallibility and authority belong only to God and His Word.

COGMA therefore strongly advises that you prayerfully study the content of each Study Guide with the heart of a Berean (**Acts 17:10–12**).

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PREFACE

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The Christian life is a life of discipleship. Jesus Christ does not simply call us to believe certain truths about Him. He calls us to follow Him, learn from Him, live according to His Word and help others follow Him also.

In the previous Study Guide, we considered worship, fellowship and testimony. We saw that the life of Jesus Christ within the born-again believer should be expressed towards God, towards His people and towards those who observe our lives.

This Study Guide takes the next step. We will consider what it means to follow Jesus Christ personally and how a growing disciple becomes able to help others follow Him.

Jesus said in **Matthew 4:19**:

> *"And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

These words bring together two important parts of discipleship. We must first follow Jesus Christ ourselves, and then allow Him to prepare us to help others.

The first part is *"Follow me."* The disciple must personally follow Jesus Christ by learning His Word, submitting to His teaching and allowing His life within to shape the way we live.

Following Jesus is therefore more than knowing what He taught. The disciple learns to obey His Word and live according to the life received from Him.

Jesus then said, *"I will make you fishers of men."* Discipleship does not end with our own spiritual growth because what we receive should eventually help someone else.

We learn so that we can teach, and we are encouraged so that we can encourage others. We grow so that we can help others grow in Jesus Christ.

This is why discipleship is more than an academic subject. It is a living relationship with Jesus Christ that becomes visible through obedience, service, love and concern for others.

Paul expressed this pattern in **2 Timothy 2:2**:

> *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."*

Truth is received and then faithfully passed to others. The disciple first learns and lives the truth, and then becomes equipped to help someone else understand and live it.

As we work through this Study Guide, the purpose is simple: Follow Jesus Christ faithfully, and become equipped to help others follow Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does following Christ lead toward helping others follow Him?

Personal Reflection

Have you considered following Jesus primarily as your own private study? What responsibility towards others might you have overlooked?

Action Step

Have you kept what you learn about Jesus Christ for your own benefit? What needs to change in your concern for others, and whom will you encourage to follow Him?

INTRODUCTION: THE CALL TO FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST

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Discipleship begins with a simple but demanding invitation from Jesus Christ: *"Follow me."* These words call the believer into a life centred upon Him.

Jesus said in **Matthew 4:19**:

> *"And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

These words reveal both the beginning and the direction of discipleship. A disciple first follows Jesus Christ personally and then becomes involved in helping others follow Him.

The call to discipleship is therefore much more than an invitation to attend meetings, complete lessons or gain biblical knowledge. It is a call to a life of learning, obedience, transformation and service.

Following Jesus Christ

When Jesus called His first disciples, He did not simply invite them to listen to occasional teaching. They walked with Him, heard His words, observed His life and learned from His example.

The same principle remains true today. A disciple learns from Jesus through His Word, follows His teaching and allows His life within to shape the way we think and live.

Jesus said in **Luke 9:23**:

> *"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."*

Following Christ therefore involves surrender. The disciple cannot follow Jesus while continuing to place self first.

There must be a willingness to obey Him even when obedience requires sacrifice. Following Jesus Christ means that His will increasingly governs the direction of our lives.

Discipleship Is the Christian Life

Discipleship is not an advanced stage of Christianity for a small number of unusually committed believers. To follow Jesus Christ is to be His disciple.

The early believers understood this because their faith affected the way they lived every day. They continued learning, praying and sharing spiritual fellowship together.

Luke wrote in **Acts 2:42**:

> *"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."*

They *"continued stedfastly."* Their new life in Jesus Christ produced an ongoing life of learning, fellowship and prayer.

Discipleship was not something added to their Christian life. It was their Christian life.

From Learning to Helping Others

Jesus' words in **Matthew 4:19** do not stop with *"Follow me."* He continued with the promise, *"and I will make you fishers of men."*

The disciple therefore does not learn only for personal benefit. As we grow in Jesus Christ, we become increasingly able to encourage, teach and strengthen others.

The truth received begins to pass from one life to another. What Jesus Christ has taught us can eventually help another person learn to follow Him.

Paul later expressed this pattern in **2 Timothy 2:2**:

> *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."*

The disciple receives truth and becomes established in it. That truth is then faithfully shared so that others can also learn, grow and eventually help someone else.

This Study Guide will therefore consider both sides of discipleship: following Jesus Christ faithfully ourselves and becoming equipped to help others follow Him.

The order is important. We must first learn to follow Jesus Christ ourselves before we can faithfully help another person follow Him.

Follow Jesus Christ, learn His Word, live according to His truth and become equipped to help others follow Him. That is the continuing call of a disciple.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does Jesus' call to follow require beyond admiration?

Personal Reflection

What teaching of Jesus do you understand but find difficult to obey? What has hindered your response?

Action Step

Think of a teaching of Jesus you understand but have delayed obeying. What has held you back, and how will you respond through His indwelling life in a real situation?

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

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The word disciple comes from the Greek word MATHĒTĒS, meaning a learner or pupil. In the New Testament, however, a disciple is much more than someone who listens to teaching. A

disciple of Jesus Christ learns from Him, follows Him, obeys Him and allows His life to shape the way he lives.

Jesus did not call people simply to agree with His teaching. He called them to follow Him.

Jesus said in **Luke 9:23**:

> *"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."*

The words *"follow me"* describe the heart of discipleship. A disciple is a learner, but that learning must lead into a life of following Jesus Christ.

A Disciple Is a Learner

Every disciple begins by learning. The first disciples listened to Jesus, watched how He lived and received His teaching.

They did not learn only from His words. They also learned from His example, seeing how He responded to people and how He lived before them.

A disciple today must learn from Jesus Christ through the Word of God. We learn what He taught, how He lived, what He values, how He treated others and how He wants us to live.

Learning is therefore essential, but learning alone is not enough. What we learn must begin to shape the way we live.

A Disciple Follows

A disciple does not simply collect information about Jesus Christ. A disciple follows Him.

Following means allowing His Word to direct our decisions, conduct and priorities. What Jesus teaches becomes the direction for the way the disciple lives.

Jesus said in **John 8:31**:

> *"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;"*

Notice the words *"If ye continue in my word."* True discipleship requires continuing.

It is not a temporary interest or an emotional beginning. The disciple continues walking with Jesus Christ and remains in His Word.

A Disciple Is Transformed

The purpose of discipleship is not information alone. It is transformation.

Paul wrote in **Romans 12:2**:

> *"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

As the disciple learns and follows Jesus Christ, thinking begins to change. Attitudes, priorities and conduct should increasingly come into agreement with His Word.

The life should increasingly reflect the character and teaching of Jesus Christ. What has been received inwardly begins to become visible outwardly.

This transformation is not produced by human effort alone. Jesus Christ lives within the born-again believer, and His life works through the Word and by His Spirit.

A Disciple Obeys

Jesus connected love for Him with obedience. The disciple does not simply hear His teaching, but desires to live according to it.

Jesus said in **John 14:15**:

> *"If ye love me, keep my commandments."*

The disciple does not decide that some teachings of Jesus are important while others can simply be ignored. Love for Jesus Christ produces a desire to obey Him.

That obedience may require sacrifice, correction and change. However, the disciple accepts the authority of Jesus Christ and allows His Word to govern the life.

A Disciple Shares Christ's Mission

A disciple is also called to look beyond personal growth. As we follow Jesus Christ, He prepares us to help others.

Jesus said in **Matthew 4:19**:

> *"And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

Notice the order again. We first follow Jesus Christ, and then He prepares us to become involved in helping others.

A disciple learns His Word and follows His teaching. The disciple is transformed by His life within, obeys His Word and becomes able to share His truth with others.

Discipleship is therefore not joining a religious organisation or simply completing a course. It is a living relationship with Jesus Christ in which we learn from Him, follow Him and allow His life within to govern the way we live.

The simplest definition is therefore: A disciple is a learner and follower of Jesus Christ who lives according to His Word and allows His life within to be expressed through them.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does a disciple share both Christ's teaching and His mission?

Personal Reflection

Which part of His call have you left to someone else?

Action Step

Which part of following Christ or helping others have you left to someone else? What attitude needs correcting, and what faithful responsibility will you take for yourself?

LEARNING, FOLLOWING AND BEING TRANSFORMED

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A disciple of Jesus Christ does more than learn information. The purpose of discipleship is transformation. What we learn from Jesus should change the way we think, the choices we make and the way we live.

The first disciples learned by walking with Jesus. They heard His words, watched His actions and saw how He responded to people and circumstances. Their lives were gradually shaped by the One they followed.

The same principle applies today. We learn from Jesus Christ through His Word, and His Spirit works within us so that truth becomes life.

Paul wrote in **Romans 12:2**:

> *"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

The disciple is not to remain shaped by the thinking of the world. Our minds are to be renewed, and that renewed thinking should increasingly affect the way we live.

Learning Must Lead to Change

Bible study is important, but knowledge alone does not make a person mature. A person may know many Scriptures and still resist what those Scriptures require.

Jesus said in **John 8:31-32**:

> *"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

Notice the importance of continuing in His Word. The disciple learns truth and then remains in that truth so that it becomes established within and begins to shape the life.

Discipleship therefore involves:

- Hearing the Word;
- Understanding the Word;
- Believing the Word;
- Obeying the Word;
- Allowing the Word to change us.

Learning has reached its proper purpose when truth begins to influence our thinking, choices and conduct. The disciple does not simply ask what a verse means, but also how that truth should affect the way we live.

Abraham: Learning to Obey by Faith

Abraham gives us a powerful example of following God through faith and obedience. He was called to move forward without knowing every detail of what lay ahead.

The writer of Hebrews wrote in **Hebrews 11:8**:

> *"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."*

Abraham did not know every detail of the journey, but he knew the One who had called him. His confidence rested upon God rather than upon having every question answered before he obeyed.

This teaches an important principle: Discipleship does not require us to understand everything before we obey. There are times when the disciple must trust Jesus Christ and walk according to the truth already made clear.

Faith responds, *"I trust the One who is leading me."* Abraham's journey was not without difficulty, but he continued following God.

Peter: Transformation Through Grace

Peter's life shows another side of discipleship. He followed Jesus closely, yet he was not instantly mature.

Peter sometimes spoke too quickly and misunderstood what Jesus was teaching. He eventually denied knowing Jesus when placed under severe pressure.

Luke recorded in **Luke 22:62**:

> *"And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."*

Peter had failed badly, but that failure did not become the end of his discipleship. Jesus restored him, and Peter continued following.

The man who had once denied Jesus later stood boldly and preached Christ. His life reminds us that discipleship involves growth and that correction should produce humility rather than abandonment.

A stumble does not need to become abandonment. When correction is needed, the disciple should respond with repentance, humility and a willingness to continue following Jesus Christ.

Christ's Life Within Transforms Us

The purpose of transformation is not simply to become a better version of ourselves. Neither is discipleship an attempt to reproduce the life of Jesus Christ through human imitation. Jesus Christ dwells within the born-again believer, and His life within must increasingly govern the way we think and live.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 11:1**:

> *"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."*

Paul could point others towards his life because his own direction was towards Jesus Christ. He was not asking people to build their lives around him. He was directing them towards Christ.

The disciple therefore learns the Word of Jesus Christ, follows Him faithfully and allows His indwelling life to be expressed through obedience, humility, love and service. His Spirit within works through the truth to transform the way we live.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must learning from Jesus transform conduct?

Personal Reflection

What habit has remained unchanged despite what you know?

Action Step

Identify a habit that has continued despite what you know from the Bible. Why has it remained, and how will you allow the Word and life of Christ within to change your response?

THE COST OF FOLLOWING CHRIST

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Following Jesus Christ requires wholehearted commitment. Discipleship cannot be added to a life in which self, possessions, ambitions or other loyalties continue to hold the highest place. Jesus Christ must come first.

Jesus said in **Luke 14:26-27**:

> *"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."*

These are strong words. Jesus was making clear that nothing can be allowed to take His place in the life of a disciple.

Even our closest relationships and our own desires must remain under our commitment to Him. Following Jesus Christ requires an undivided loyalty in which He holds the highest place.

Deny Self and Follow Christ

Jesus gave the same principle in **Luke 9:23**:

> *"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."*

Notice the three parts: deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me. Each one points towards a life surrendered to Jesus Christ.

To deny self means that self is no longer allowed to govern the life. The disciple learns to surrender personal ambition, pride and selfish desire to the will of Jesus Christ.

The cross speaks of surrender, and Jesus said that it is to be taken up *"daily."* Discipleship is therefore not one decision made years ago, but a continuing life of following Christ.

Each day brings choices in which the disciple must decide who will govern the life. Following Jesus means continuing to place His will above our own.

The Rich Young Ruler

The rich young ruler provides a clear example of what happens when something becomes more important than following Jesus. He desired eternal life, but Jesus brought him face to face with what held his heart.

Jesus said to him in **Luke 18:22**:

> *"Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me."*

The man had kept many commandments, but Jesus exposed the thing he was unwilling to surrender. His possessions stood between him and wholehearted discipleship.

Luke continued in **Luke 18:23**:

> *"And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich."*

The problem was not simply that he possessed wealth. The problem was that wealth possessed his heart.

When Jesus called him to surrender what stood in the way and follow Him, he was unwilling. His sorrow revealed the strength of the hold his possessions had upon him.

What Competes With Christ?

The same question must be faced by every disciple. We must be willing to examine whether anything is competing with Jesus Christ for first place in our lives.

It may be possessions, personal ambition, reputation or comfort. It may also be relationships, plans for the future or simply the desire to live according to our own will.

Jesus may not ask every disciple to surrender the same thing in the same way. However, every disciple must be willing to place everything under His Lordship.

The question is not, *"How little can I surrender and still be a disciple?"* That question is still centred upon self and how much self can retain.

The greater question is, *"Is anything more important to me than following Jesus Christ?"* Whatever competes with Him for first place must be brought under His authority.

Following Christ Is Worth the Cost

The cost of discipleship should never be separated from the One we are following. Jesus Christ has given us salvation, life and Himself.

Following Him may require surrender, but what we have received in Him is greater than anything we leave behind. The disciple therefore does not measure the value of following Christ only by what must be surrendered.

The rich young ruler looked at what he would lose. The disciple must learn to look at Jesus Christ.

Discipleship is not about earning salvation through sacrifice. Salvation has already been freely received through Jesus Christ, and surrender is the response of a life that now belongs to Him.

The disciple therefore follows Jesus without divided loyalty. Possessions, ambitions, comfort, relationships and self must all remain beneath His authority.

To follow Jesus Christ means placing Him above possessions, ambition, comfort, relationships and self. The true disciple settles the question of who holds first place.

Whatever the cost, Jesus Christ comes first.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What cost of following Christ do you need to face honestly?

Personal Reflection

Where has comfort or approval competed with obedience?

Action Step

Where has a desire for comfort, approval or possessions competed with obedience to Jesus?
What must you surrender, and what decision will show that Christ comes first?

LOVE AND SERVICE AT THE HEART OF DISCIPLESHIP

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Discipleship is not only about learning truth and following instructions. At the heart of discipleship is love for God and love for others. Without love, discipleship can become cold, formal and mechanical. With love, truth is shared in a way that strengthens, serves and helps others grow in Jesus Christ.

Jesus said in **Matthew 22:37-39**:

> *"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."*

These two commandments provide an important foundation for discipleship. We learn God's Word because we love Him and want to know His will, and we help others because we love them and want them to walk in truth.

Love for God Comes First

The disciple's first loyalty is to Jesus Christ. Love for Him should shape every other part of our life and govern the way we follow Him.

Jesus said in **John 14:15**:

> *"If ye love me, keep my commandments."*

Love for Jesus Christ is therefore not simply an emotion. It produces obedience and a desire to live according to His Word.

The disciple learns His Word, follows His teaching and seeks to live in a way that honours Him. We obey because Jesus Christ has become the centre of our life.

Love for Others Produces Discipleship

Love for God should also produce love for people. A disciple does not receive truth only for personal benefit because the love of Christ within creates concern for others.

We want others to know Jesus Christ and understand His Word. We want them to grow strong in the faith, avoid error and continue walking in truth.

This is why discipleship is relational. Truth is passed from one believer to another through relationships where love, patience and care are present.

The purpose is not simply to transfer information. We desire to help another person become established in Jesus Christ and able to walk faithfully with Him.

Jesus Christ Came to Serve

Jesus gave the clearest example of the servant heart. His life showed that true greatness is not found in seeking position or expecting others to serve us.

Jesus said in **Mark 10:45**:

> *"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."*

Jesus did not seek a position in which others would constantly serve Him. He served.

He helped those in need, taught those who needed understanding and strengthened the weak. Ultimately, He gave His life for others.

This reveals the spirit that should govern discipleship. Greatness is not found in being served; greatness is found in serving.

The disciple who helps another person grow should therefore have the same servant heart. We are not seeking importance or recognition, but the spiritual good of the person we are helping.

Discipleship Is Not Control

Helping someone follow Jesus Christ does not mean controlling that person's life. The disciple who teaches or encourages another believer must never seek to make that person dependent upon themselves.

The purpose is to help another person become stronger in Jesus Christ and established in His Word. As understanding grows, that believer should become increasingly able to search the Scriptures, make wise decisions and follow Jesus Christ personally.

This requires humility from the person helping them. We teach and encourage, but we continually point towards Christ.

When correction is necessary, the same principle remains. The purpose of correction is not to establish our authority over another person, but to help that person return to truth and continue following Jesus Christ.

The goal is never to build personal loyalty around ourselves. The goal is to help another person follow Jesus Christ faithfully.

Love Must Remain Visible

Jesus said in **John 13:35**:

> *"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*

Love is therefore one of the clearest marks of true discipleship. It should become visible in the way we speak, serve, encourage, correct and care for others.

Discipleship without love can become harsh and controlling. Love without truth can become weak and fail to give the direction another person needs.

Biblical discipleship brings truth and love together. Truth gives the disciple the right direction, while love governs the spirit in which that truth is shared.

We follow Jesus Christ because we love Him, and that love does not remain directed towards Him alone. His life within us produces love and service towards others.

We follow Jesus Christ because we love Him, and we help others follow Him because His love within us reaches towards them.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How are love and service central to discipleship?

Personal Reflection

Whose need have you ignored while speaking about following Christ?

Action Step

Whose needs have you ignored while speaking about discipleship? What has hindered your love, and how will you express the servant life of Christ by meeting a real need?

THE MISSION OF A DISCIPLE

BACK TO CONTENTS

The disciple is called not only to follow Jesus Christ personally, but also to share in His purpose for others. Discipleship has an outward mission. What we receive from Christ should not remain with us alone.

Paul wrote in **1 Timothy 2:3-4**:

> *"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."*

These words reveal the heart behind the mission. God desires people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

The disciple therefore develops a concern for people who do not yet know Jesus Christ. We should also care for believers who need to grow and become established in truth.

The Mission Begins With Jesus Christ

The mission does not begin with our plans, abilities or organisations. It begins with Jesus Christ.

Before a disciple can faithfully help others, that disciple must first learn from Him. We cannot lead others in a way that we are unwilling to walk ourselves.

The life of Moses illustrates this principle. Before Moses could lead Israel, God spent many years preparing him, and his strength did not come simply from natural ability.

Moses wrote in **Exodus 33:11**:

> *"And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle."*

Moses' usefulness flowed from his relationship with God. His responsibility towards others could not be separated from the time in which God had prepared and taught him.

The same principle applies to discipleship. We must first learn from Jesus Christ before we can faithfully help others follow Him.

We Receive So That We Can Give

Everything we have studied so far helps prepare the disciple for this mission. What Jesus Christ gives and teaches us can eventually become a means of helping someone else.

We receive the Word so that we can share truth, and we learn to pray so that we can pray for others. We learn to serve so that we can help others, and we develop a testimony so that we can bear witness to Jesus Christ.

We also grow as disciples so that we can eventually strengthen other disciples. The Christian life should therefore never become completely inward-looking.

Jesus Christ saves us, teaches us and establishes us in truth. As we grow, He begins using our lives for the good of others.

Paul: A Life Given to the Mission

Paul provides a clear New Testament example of a life given to this mission. Jesus Christ called him to bear His name before others.

Jesus said concerning Paul in **Acts 9:15**:

> *"But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:"*

Paul's life was given to bearing the name of Jesus Christ. His mission required obedience, endurance and sacrifice.

He faced opposition, suffering and imprisonment, yet he continued faithfully. What he had received from Jesus Christ had become something he was responsible to share.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 9:16**:

> *"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"*

Paul understood that what he had received carried responsibility. He could not simply keep the truth to himself.

Mission Is More Than Preaching

Not every disciple will have the same ministry as Paul. Not every believer is called to preach publicly or travel to other nations.

However, every disciple can participate in Christ's mission. The opportunities may differ, but each believer can allow the life and truth of Jesus Christ to reach others.

A disciple may:

- Speak to others about Jesus Christ;
- Share what has been learned from His Word;

- Encourage believers who are struggling;
- Help new believers understand truth;
- Pray for those who do not yet know Christ;
- Live in a way that gives a faithful testimony of Him.

Mission therefore begins wherever Jesus Christ has placed us. We do not need to wait for a public position or recognised ministry before becoming concerned for others.

From Follower to Helper

The disciple first learns to follow Jesus Christ. Then, as understanding and maturity grow, the disciple becomes increasingly able to help someone else follow Him.

This does not mean that we stop learning. We remain disciples of Jesus Christ throughout our lives and continue depending upon Him.

What we receive, however, begins to flow outward. Truth received becomes truth shared, encouragement received becomes encouragement given, and spiritual growth prepares us to strengthen others.

The mission of a disciple is to follow Jesus Christ faithfully and then allow His truth, life and love to reach others through us. We have been saved and brought to the knowledge of truth, and we now become part of helping others come to Jesus Christ and grow in Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does a disciple's mission include bearing witness to Christ?

Personal Reflection

When have you kept the Gospel to yourself?

Action Step

Have you avoided speaking about Jesus because of fear or uncertainty? What truth about Him should strengthen your confidence, and who will you approach with genuine care?

THE GREAT COMMISSION: MAKE DISCIPLES

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Jesus Christ gave His disciples a clear mission. They were not simply to preach a message and then move on. They were to make disciples: people who would learn from Jesus Christ, follow Him and live according to His teaching.

Jesus said in **Matthew 28:19-20**:

> *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."*

The command to make disciples must not be understood as making literal water baptism the means by which a person enters Christ or becomes part of His Church. The New Covenant reality is the spiritual baptism by which the born-again believer is placed into Christ and His

body by the Spirit. Water cannot produce the new birth or complete what Jesus Christ has already accomplished.

The word translated *"teach"* in verse 19 comes from the Greek word MATHĒTEUŌ, which carries the meaning of making disciples. Jesus was therefore commanding His followers to do much more than pass on information because they were to help others become followers of Him.

Go

Jesus began with the command *"Go."* Discipleship has an outward direction because the truth we have received is intended to reach others.

Jesus also said in **Mark 16:15**:

> *"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."*

The disciple should therefore develop a concern for others. There are people who need salvation and people who need to understand the truth.

There are also believers who need encouragement and instruction. We begin where God has placed us and use the opportunities He gives to speak about Jesus Christ and help others understand His Word.

Make Disciples

The goal is not simply to obtain a response to a message. The goal is discipleship.

A disciple is someone who learns from Jesus Christ, follows Him and allows His teaching to shape the life. This means that the work does not end when someone first believes.

New believers need to grow and become established in the Word. They need encouragement and help learning how to pray, walk by faith, serve others and live according to truth.

Jesus did not tell His disciples simply to gather converts. He told them to make disciples.

Teach Them to Observe

Jesus continued with the words *"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."* Notice that He did not say only to teach them to know what He had commanded.

He said, *"Teaching them to observe."* Biblical discipleship therefore aims at obedience.

Knowledge is important, but the purpose of teaching is that truth becomes part of the life. The disciple-maker does not simply explain what Jesus taught, but helps another believer understand how that truth should affect daily living.

Truth should begin to shape thinking and choices. It should also influence conduct, relationships and the daily walk with Jesus Christ.

This is why discipleship takes time. A person may hear a truth quickly, but learning to understand and live that truth requires continuing instruction, encouragement and personal responsibility.

Discipleship Requires Relationship

Jesus spent time with His disciples. He taught them, answered their questions, corrected them, encouraged them and showed them how to live.

Making disciples therefore involves more than delivering lessons. It involves walking with people and helping them apply the truth they are learning.

Paul later followed this same pattern. He taught believers, prayed for them, encouraged them and continued helping them grow in Jesus Christ.

The disciple-maker is not seeking control over another person. The purpose is to help that person become established in Jesus Christ and His Word so that they can follow Him faithfully for themselves.

Jesus Christ Remains the Centre

The Great Commission is not about making followers of ourselves. We are making disciples of Jesus Christ.

We do not teach people to depend upon our personality, opinions or authority. We continually point them towards Jesus Christ and the truth of His Word.

We teach His Word and model obedience to Him. We also encourage others to know Him, search the Scriptures and become personally established in truth.

The goal is that believers become strong enough to follow Jesus Christ faithfully and eventually help others do the same. Healthy discipleship therefore produces greater dependence upon Jesus Christ rather than greater dependence upon the person doing the teaching.

The Commission Continues

The Great Commission was not fulfilled by one generation of believers and then finished. Truth is received, lived and faithfully passed onward.

This gives us a continuing pattern: Go. Make disciples. Teach them to obey Jesus Christ. Those disciples then grow until they also become able to help others.

Discipleship therefore continues from one life to another. The disciple first follows Jesus Christ, then helps another person follow Him, and that person eventually becomes able to strengthen someone else.

The Great Commission is not simply a command to spread information. It is a call to reproduce followers of Jesus Christ who know His Word, live His truth and help others follow Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does the Great Commission require disciples to make and teach?

Personal Reflection

Have you confused a first response with the whole work of discipleship?

Action Step

Have you treated a person's first response to the Gospel as the end of your responsibility? What further care may be needed, and how will you help them learn to obey Jesus?

EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLESHIP BELONG TOGETHER

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Evangelism and discipleship should never be separated. The Gospel calls people not only to hear about Jesus Christ, but to follow Him. A person who responds to the Gospel needs to be taught, encouraged and helped to grow in the truth.

Jesus said in **Mark 16:15**:

> *"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."*

The Gospel must be preached, but the work does not end with preaching. Jesus also commanded His followers to make disciples and teach them to observe what He had commanded.

Evangelism should therefore lead into discipleship. People are brought to Jesus Christ through the Gospel and then helped to grow in the new life they have received.

Evangelism Is the Beginning

When someone hears the Gospel and responds to Jesus Christ, that is not the end of the work. It is the beginning of a new life.

A new believer needs:

- Sound teaching;
- Prayer;
- Fellowship;
- Encouragement;
- Correction when needed;
- Help learning how to follow Jesus Christ faithfully.

Evangelism without discipleship can be compared with bringing a child into the world and then leaving that child without care. New spiritual life needs nurturing so that the believer can grow and become established in Jesus Christ.

The new birth gives life, but growth must follow. The new believer needs the Word, fellowship, prayer and the help of other believers while learning to walk in Christ.

Jesus Called People to Follow Him

The Gospel is more than an invitation to make a single decision. Jesus called people into a continuing life of following Him.

Jesus said in **Luke 14:26-27**:

> *"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."*

Jesus called people to wholehearted discipleship. Following Him involves surrender and a willingness to place Him above every competing loyalty.

The Gospel therefore includes the call to follow Christ, surrender to Him and continue in His Word. The person who receives new life must now learn how to walk faithfully in that life.

Witness Leads to Growth

Jesus called His disciples to become witnesses of Him. Their words and lives were to bear testimony to Jesus Christ.

Jesus said in **Acts 1:8**:

> *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*

A witness of Jesus Christ does more than speak words. The life should also bear testimony to the truth being proclaimed.

When people respond to that witness, discipleship continues the work. New believers need help becoming established in truth and learning how to follow Jesus Christ for themselves.

Paul Wanted Mature Believers

Paul did not simply want people to hear the Gospel once. He wanted them to grow and become mature in Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:28**:

> *"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:"*

Notice the progression: preaching, warning, teaching and presenting every person mature in Christ. Paul was concerned with the continuing spiritual growth of those who had received the Gospel.

He was not satisfied with shallow belief. He wanted believers to become established, faithful and mature in Jesus Christ.

This is the work of discipleship. Evangelism brings the Gospel to people, while discipleship continues helping them understand and live the truth they have received.

The Early Church Continued Together

The early believers provide a clear example of this continuing growth. After receiving the Gospel, they did not simply return to their former lives without further teaching or fellowship.

Luke wrote in **Acts 2:42**:

> *"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."*

Notice again that they *"continued stedfastly."* They learned, prayed, shared fellowship and grew together.

The Gospel had brought them to Jesus Christ, and discipleship helped establish them in the new life they had received. Their beginning became a continuing walk.

The Work Continues

Evangelism reaches people with the Gospel, while discipleship helps them grow. Evangelism introduces people to Jesus Christ, while discipleship teaches them how to continue following Him.

The two therefore belong together. The work is not complete simply because someone has heard the Gospel or made an initial response.

The goal is to see people become faithful disciples of Jesus Christ who know His Word, live His truth and eventually become able to help others follow Him also.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must Gospel proclamation lead into continued discipleship?

Personal Reflection

Whom have you spoken to but not helped to grow?

Action Step

Think of someone who has heard the Gospel but still needs encouragement. What has stopped you helping them further, and what appropriate next step will you offer?

EVERY BELIEVER IS CALLED TO MAKE DISCIPLES

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Some people think disciple-making belongs only to pastors, elders, teachers or those with recognised ministry positions. The New Testament presents discipleship as something every believer can participate in.

Jesus chose ordinary people to carry His message. Among His disciples were fishermen and a tax collector, and their usefulness did not come from social position or academic achievement. It came from following Jesus Christ and allowing Him to teach and transform them.

The same principle remains true today. Every believer can grow in Jesus Christ and become able to help someone else follow Him.

Passing Truth From One Person to Another

Paul gave Timothy a simple pattern for continuing the work of discipleship. Truth was to pass faithfully from one person to another.

Paul wrote in **2 Timothy 2:2**:

> *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."*

Notice the progression. Paul taught Timothy, Timothy was to teach faithful people, and those faithful people would then become able to teach others.

Truth was not intended to stop with one person. What we receive should eventually be passed on.

This does not mean that every believer must become a public preacher. Disciple-making often happens quietly through personal relationships, conversations, prayer, encouragement and studying the Word together.

You Do Not Need to Know Everything

A common reason people hesitate to help others is because they feel they do not know enough. However, discipleship does not require us to know everything before we begin helping someone.

We simply share faithfully what Jesus Christ has already taught us. At the same time, we remain humble about what we do not yet understand and continue learning from His Word.

A believer who has learned how to pray can help someone learn to pray. A believer who has understood a truth from Scripture can help another person understand that truth.

Someone who has walked through difficulty with Jesus Christ can also encourage another believer facing a similar trial. We continue learning while helping others learn.

God Uses Ordinary People

Human qualifications do not determine whether God can use us. Paul reminded the Corinthians that God often works through those the world does not consider important.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 1:27**:

> *"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;"*

Age does not prevent a person from helping another disciple, and education does not determine spiritual usefulness. Social position also does not decide whether someone can faithfully share what Jesus Christ has taught them.

A person with little formal education may help someone highly educated understand spiritual truth. An older believer may encourage a younger believer, while a younger believer who has learned something faithfully may also strengthen someone else.

The power is not in human importance. The power is in Jesus Christ. Our usefulness comes from knowing Him, receiving His Word and faithfully sharing what He has taught us.

Christ Is Our Wisdom

The disciple-maker must never begin trusting in personal cleverness, personality or experience. Our confidence remains in Jesus Christ.

Paul continued in **1 Corinthians 1:30**:

> *"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:"*

Jesus Christ is our wisdom. The disciple-maker therefore remains dependent upon Him, studies His Word carefully and continually points others towards Him.

We are not trying to make people dependent upon our knowledge. We are helping them become established in Jesus Christ and able to understand His Word for themselves.

Every Disciple Can Help Someone

Not every believer will disciple others in exactly the same way. Opportunities, abilities and circumstances will differ, but every disciple can look for ways to strengthen someone else.

We can ask who needs encouragement and who may need help understanding the Word. We can also consider who we can pray with and who we may be able to help follow Jesus Christ more faithfully.

Disciple-making often begins simply when one believer becomes willing to invest time, truth, prayer and encouragement into another person's spiritual growth. What begins quietly in one relationship can eventually prepare that person to help someone else.

Every believer is called not only to follow Jesus Christ, but to become willing and equipped to help others follow Him also.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why is disciple-making a calling for every believer?

Personal Reflection

What excuse has made you leave this work only to recognised leaders?

Action Step

Have you left disciple-making only to people with public roles? What does that reveal about your understanding of your calling, and what simple step will you begin?

SPIRITUAL FRUITFULNESS AND SPIRITUAL FAMILY

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From the beginning, God revealed a principle of fruitfulness and multiplication. This principle can help us understand the responsibility of a disciple to allow the life and truth received from Jesus Christ to reach others.

Moses wrote in **Genesis 1:28**:

> *"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."*

On the natural level, Adam and Eve were commanded to multiply and fill the earth. The Hebrew word translated *"replenish"* is MALE, meaning *"to fill," "to complete"* or *"to replace."* Adam and Eve were naturally to fill the earth through physical multiplication.

This natural picture helps us understand the principle of spiritual fruitfulness. A disciple should not remain spiritually isolated, but should help the life and truth received from Jesus Christ reach others.

Spiritual Fruitfulness

Spiritual fruitfulness is more than increasing numbers. The goal is to see people come to Jesus Christ, become established in truth and grow into faithful disciples.

Spiritual fruitfulness includes:

- Helping others come to Jesus Christ;
- Nurturing believers in the truth;
- Encouraging them to grow;
- Preparing them to help others also.

Paul demonstrated this kind of fruitfulness throughout his ministry. He did not simply preach and move on, but continued caring for those who had received the Gospel and helping them grow.

Paul as a Spiritual Father

Paul sometimes described those he had discipled as his spiritual children. This language shows the depth of his concern for their spiritual lives.

Paul wrote in **1 Timothy 1:2**:

> *"Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord."*

He also wrote concerning Onesimus in **Philemon 1**:10:

> *"I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:"*

Paul did not treat these believers simply as students who attended lessons. He cared about their spiritual growth, prayed for them, corrected them and encouraged them.

This gives us a picture of spiritual parenthood. A disciple who helps another believer grow should develop genuine concern for that person's spiritual welfare.

The Church Is a Spiritual Family

The Church is not simply an organisation made up of people who attend the same meetings. It is a spiritual body and family made up of those who have been born of God.

Within a healthy family, those who are stronger care for those who are younger and less mature. The same principle should operate among believers.

A more mature disciple can help someone younger in the faith by:

- Explaining Scripture;
- Answering questions;

- Praying with them;
- Encouraging them during difficulty;
- Correcting misunderstanding with patience;
- Showing through personal example how to follow Jesus Christ.

Spiritual family therefore involves responsibility towards one another. Those who have grown should be willing to help those who are still becoming established.

Jesus Christ Is Our Model

Jesus Christ gives us the greatest example of caring for and nurturing others. His concern for His people was not distant or impersonal.

Jesus said in **John 10:11**:

> *"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."*

Jesus taught His disciples patiently and corrected them when they misunderstood. He encouraged them when they were afraid and continued preparing them for the work they would later undertake.

Disciple-making should reflect the same spirit. We do not simply give people information; we care for their growth.

The Word Produces Growth

At the centre of spiritual nurturing must always be the Word of God. Personal experience and advice may sometimes help, but Scripture must remain the foundation of discipleship.

Paul wrote in **2 Timothy 3:16**:

> *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"*

The disciple-maker does not build others around personal opinions or personality. We use Scripture to teach truth, correct error and instruct in righteousness.

The goal is not to make someone dependent upon us. The goal is to help them become strong in Jesus Christ and His Word.

As another believer grows, that person should become increasingly able to search the Scriptures, understand truth and follow Jesus Christ faithfully. Healthy spiritual parenthood therefore produces stronger disciples rather than permanent dependence upon the person helping them.

Fruit That Continues

Spiritual fruitfulness becomes visible when a disciple grows strong enough to help someone else. What has been received begins to pass faithfully from one life to another.

The pattern is simple: A disciple is taught. That disciple grows. That disciple helps another. The process then continues as each growing believer becomes able to strengthen someone else.

In this way, spiritual life and truth continue from one believer to another. The disciple remains a learner while also becoming able to help others grow.

A fruitful disciple does not keep the life and truth received from Jesus Christ to himself, but helps nurture others within the spiritual family of God.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do spiritual fruit and family reveal ongoing growth?

Personal Reflection

Where is your relationship with other believers bearing little fruit?

Action Step

Consider a relationship with another believer that has borne little spiritual fruit. What needs changing in your care, and how will you encourage their walk with Christ?

DISCIPLESHIP IS RELATIONAL

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Discipleship is not simply an academic programme or a system of lessons. Discipleship is relational. Jesus did not only speak to His disciples from a distance. He walked with them, taught them, corrected them, encouraged them and allowed them to see how He lived.

The same principle should guide discipleship today. Truth is taught through the Word, but it is also demonstrated through the life of the person teaching it.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 11:1**:

> *"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."*

Paul could say this because those he discipled had seen his life as well as heard his teaching. His example was valuable because it directed them towards Jesus Christ.

Walking Alongside Others

A disciple-maker does more than explain Scripture. Discipleship includes teaching, guiding, encouraging, correcting, praying, listening and helping another believer grow.

This requires personal involvement. The disciple-maker does not stand above another person as someone important, but walks alongside them while both continue following Jesus Christ.

The relationship must remain centred upon Him. One believer may be helping another, but both remain disciples who are learning from and following Jesus Christ.

Jesus Spent Time With His Disciples

Jesus deliberately chose twelve men to be with Him. Their preparation involved spending time with Jesus before they were sent to serve others.

Mark wrote in **Mark 3:14**:

> *"And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,"*

Notice the order. First, *"that they should be with him,"* and then, *"that he might send them forth."*

Before they were sent to serve others, they spent time with Jesus. They heard His teaching in public and private, and they were able to ask questions and receive further instruction.

They also saw how He treated people and watched Him pray. They observed His compassion, patience, courage and faithfulness.

Their training therefore took place through shared life as well as spoken teaching. They learned by hearing Jesus and by watching how He lived.

Example Is Part of Discipleship

People learn not only from what we teach, but also from what they observe. The disciple-maker should therefore consider whether the life being lived supports the truth being taught.

If we teach prayer but rarely pray, the message becomes weak. If we teach love but behave harshly, our example contradicts our words.

If we teach faithfulness but live carelessly, others will notice. The life should support the teaching.

This does not mean that the disciple-maker must be perfect before helping another person. It means that we should sincerely live what we teach and remain willing to receive correction ourselves.

Relationship Builds Trust

Healthy discipleship requires trust, and trust normally develops through genuine care and consistent relationship. A person is more likely to ask difficult questions, admit struggles and receive correction when they know that the person helping them truly cares.

This is why discipleship cannot be reduced to delivering information. Lessons may provide important teaching, but personal discipleship often continues beyond the lesson itself.

Discipleship may continue through conversations, prayer together and discussing Scripture. It can also involve helping someone through difficulties, sharing experiences and encouraging one another in everyday life.

Through these relationships, truth becomes practical. The disciple begins to understand not only what Scripture teaches, but how that truth should be lived.

Relationship Must Point to Christ

Relational discipleship must never create unhealthy dependence upon the disciple-maker. The purpose is not to make another believer dependent upon our personality, advice or approval.

Paul did not simply say, *"Be ye followers of me."* He said, *"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."*

The example is valuable only while it points towards Jesus Christ. The goal is always to help another person follow Him.

A healthy disciple-making relationship should therefore help another believer become stronger in the Word and more dependent upon Jesus Christ. As that person grows, they should become increasingly able to search the Scriptures, make wise decisions and stand faithfully in Christ.

Discipleship Is Life Shared

Information can be transferred quickly, but character usually develops over time. This is why discipleship requires patience, relationship and continuing care.

We walk with people and teach them the Word. We encourage them, help them through mistakes and continually point them back towards Jesus Christ.

The disciple-maker remains a disciple as well. Both people continue learning, growing and following Jesus Christ, even though one may presently be helping the other.

Discipleship is truth shared through life and relationship, as one believer helps another learn to follow Jesus Christ faithfully.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does discipleship need real relationships over time?

Personal Reflection

Have you offered advice without sharing life or listening?

Action Step

Have you offered advice without taking time to listen or understand? What should change in your approach, and when will you give another disciple your genuine attention?

TEACHING, MODELLING, ENCOURAGING AND CORRECTING

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Discipleship is practical. A disciple-maker does not simply pass on information and then step away. We help others grow by teaching the Word, modelling obedience, encouraging faith and correcting error when necessary.

These four areas work together. Teaching without example can become empty, while example without teaching may lack clarity. Encouragement without correction can leave error unchallenged, while correction without encouragement can become harsh.

Healthy discipleship brings all four together. The purpose is always to help another believer become stronger in Jesus Christ and His Word.

Teaching the Word

The foundation of discipleship is the Word of God. The disciple-maker must therefore keep Scripture at the centre of what is being taught.

Paul wrote in **2 Timothy 4:2**:

> *"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."*

The disciple-maker must not build others around personal opinions, traditions or personality. We teach the Word.

Scripture provides doctrine, exposes error, corrects wrong thinking and shows the disciple how to live. The purpose is to help another believer understand what God has said and become established in truth.

Teaching also requires patience because people do not understand everything immediately. Questions will arise, some truths will need to be explained again, and understanding will develop over time.

The goal is not simply that someone remembers what we said. The goal is that they understand the Word for themselves.

Modelling Obedience

Disciples also learn by watching. The life of the disciple-maker should therefore support the truth being taught.

Jesus taught through both words and example. He said in **John 13:14-15**:

> *"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."*

The lesson reached beyond the physical action itself. Jesus was not establishing feet washing as a continuing physical ordinance for the Church. He was showing the humility and servant life that His own life within His people would produce.

A disciple-maker should therefore seek to live the truth being taught. If we teach prayer, others should see that prayer matters to us, and if we teach service, they should see a servant heart.

If we teach faithfulness, our lives should demonstrate consistency. Words instruct, but example gives those words visible form.

Encouraging Faith

Discipleship also requires encouragement because the road of faith is not always easy. New believers may face discouragement, opposition, unanswered questions or times of personal weakness.

The writer of Hebrews wrote in **Hebrews 10:24-25**:

> *"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."*

To exhort includes encouraging and strengthening others to continue. The disciple-maker should therefore be sensitive to times when another believer needs support.

Sometimes a disciple needs someone to remind them of what God has said or pray with them through a difficulty. At other times, they may simply need encouragement to continue following Jesus Christ faithfully.

Encouragement is not flattery. It is helping another believer continue in faith.

Correcting Error

Love also requires correction because allowing serious error to continue does not help another believer grow. Correction has a proper place within faithful discipleship.

Paul gives a clear example in **Galatians 2:11**:

> *"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."*

Paul did not ignore Peter's conduct simply to avoid discomfort. When the truth of the Gospel was being compromised, he addressed the matter.

Correction should never be used to humiliate, dominate or control another person. The purpose of correction is restoration.

We correct because truth matters and because we care about the person. This requires wisdom, patience and humility from the disciple-maker.

Before correcting another person, we should make sure that the correction is based upon Scripture rather than personal preference. The purpose is to bring the person back towards truth, not simply to make them agree with us.

Nurturing Growth With Patience

Disciples grow in stages, and a new believer should not be expected to possess immediate maturity. Spiritual growth requires time, nourishment and continuing care.

Peter wrote in **1 Peter 2:2**:

> *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:"*

The disciple-maker must therefore allow time for growth. We should not become impatient simply because another believer has not yet reached the understanding or maturity we think they should have.

We teach the Word and model obedience. We encourage faith and correct error when necessary.

Through all of these, we continually point the person towards Jesus Christ and His Word. The disciple-maker serves the growth of another believer while recognising that Jesus Christ remains the source of spiritual life and maturity.

Faithful discipleship combines truth with patience, example with instruction, encouragement with correction, and love with a sincere desire to see another believer grow strong in Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do teaching, modelling, encouragement, and correction work together?

Personal Reflection

Which of these have you neglected with someone you guide?

Action Step

When helping another person, have you neglected patient teaching, encouragement, example or correction? What is needed now, and how will you respond with truth and love?

PRAYER, SHARED LIFE, CARE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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Discipleship involves much more than teaching someone what the Bible says. A disciple-maker walks alongside another believer through prayer, shared life, practical care and loving accountability. These things help truth move from knowledge into daily living.

Jesus did not train His disciples from a distance. He spent time with them, answered their questions and walked with them through both success and failure. Healthy discipleship should reflect the same spirit.

Pray for Those You Disciple

Teaching is important, but there are needs that teaching alone cannot meet. The disciple-maker should therefore pray faithfully for those they are helping.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:3**:

> *"We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,"*

Prayer shows that we recognise our dependence upon Jesus Christ. We may teach, encourage and advise, but only God can work within another person's heart.

We should pray for their understanding, faithfulness, wisdom and strength. We should also pray that they continue growing and becoming established in Jesus Christ.

Discipleship works with people, but depends upon God. The disciple-maker therefore teaches faithfully while continuing to bring the person before Jesus Christ in prayer.

Share Life Together

Jesus deliberately brought His disciples close to Him. Their preparation involved more than listening to teaching because they also spent time with Him.

Mark wrote in **Mark 3:14**:

> *"And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,"*

Notice that before Jesus sent them, they were *"with him."* Their time with Jesus prepared them for the work they would later undertake.

They travelled together, ate together and faced difficulties together. They also saw how Jesus responded to people and to the ordinary circumstances of life.

Much of their training therefore took place through shared life. Discipleship today should also extend beyond formal teaching sessions.

Conversations, prayer, working together and walking through difficulties can all provide opportunities for spiritual growth. Truth often becomes clearer when the disciple sees how it applies to everyday life.

Bear One Another's Burdens

Discipleship also involves care because people sometimes carry spiritual, emotional or practical burdens that become difficult to bear alone. The disciple-maker should be willing to notice those burdens and help where possible.

Paul wrote in **Galatians 6:2**:

> *"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."*

Bearing another person's burden does not mean that we can remove every difficulty. Some trials must be walked through, but we can pray, listen, encourage and offer practical help.

We can also remind the person of the truth of God's Word. Sometimes simply knowing that another believer cares and is willing to walk beside us can bring great encouragement.

Bearing burdens communicates an important message: *"You do not have to walk through this alone."* As disciples experience this kind of care, they also learn how to care for others.

Accountability Helps Us Grow

Healthy discipleship also includes accountability. Another believer may sometimes recognise a weakness, inconsistency or danger that we have failed to see ourselves.

Solomon wrote in **Proverbs 27:17**:

> *"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."*

We all have areas in which we need encouragement or correction. Accountability provides an opportunity to speak honestly about our spiritual walk and receive help when needed.

We may ask whether we are praying and studying the Word faithfully. We can also speak honestly about whether we are living according to what we say we believe and whether there are areas in which we are struggling.

These questions should be asked with care rather than suspicion. The purpose is to help another believer remain faithful and continue growing.

Accountability should never become control. The disciple-maker is not taking the place of Jesus Christ or attempting to govern another person's conscience.

Accountability helps us remain personally responsible before God. It should direct the disciple towards greater faithfulness to Jesus Christ rather than greater dependence upon another person.

Accountability Requires Humility

Accountability works in both directions because every believer remains a disciple of Jesus Christ. The person being discipled must be willing to receive counsel, but the disciple-maker must also remain humble and teachable.

No disciple-maker reaches a place where correction is no longer needed. We are all still following Jesus Christ.

This protects discipleship from becoming a relationship in which one person considers themselves spiritually superior to another. One believer may have greater experience and

presently be helping another, but both remain under the authority of Jesus Christ and His Word.

Humility allows both people to keep growing. The disciple-maker teaches and guides while remaining willing to learn, receive correction and continue following Jesus Christ personally.

Love Governs the Relationship

Jesus said in **John 13:35**:

> *"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*

Love must govern every part of the discipleship relationship. Prayer, care, correction and accountability all lose their proper purpose when love is absent.

Prayer without love can become duty, while correction without love can become harsh. Accountability without love can become control.

When love governs the relationship, truth can be taught honestly and difficulties can be shared openly. Correction can be received in the spirit in which it is intended, and both believers can continue growing together in Jesus Christ.

We pray for one another, share life, bear burdens and encourage accountability because we genuinely desire to see one another grow strong in Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why do prayer, shared life, care, and accountability strengthen disciples?

Personal Reflection

Where have you avoided either asking for help or giving it?

Action Step

Have you avoided asking for help or offering it because of pride or discomfort? What must change, and how will you begin an honest conversation and prayer with another believer?

PASSING THE TRUTH TO FAITHFUL PEOPLE

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Discipleship is not complete when truth has only been received. What Jesus Christ teaches us should eventually be passed faithfully to others.

Paul wrote in **2 Timothy 2:2**:

> *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."*

This verse gives us one of the clearest patterns of discipleship in the New Testament. The truth moved from Paul to Timothy, from Timothy to faithful people, and from those faithful people to others also.

This is how truth continues from one generation of believers to the next. What one disciple faithfully receives becomes something that can eventually strengthen many others.

Truth Received

Timothy first received truth from Paul. Before we can faithfully teach others, we must first be willing to learn.

The disciple listens, studies, asks questions and allows the Word of God to become established personally. We should not rush into teaching something we do not yet understand.

Truth must first be received and understood. It should also become part of our own conviction and life before we attempt to help someone else understand it.

Truth Shared

Paul then told Timothy, *"the same commit thou to faithful men."* Timothy was not to keep what he had learned to himself because the truth was intended to be passed onward.

This is an important principle for every disciple. God may teach us through Scripture, faithful teachers, fellowship or personal study, but what we receive should eventually become something that can help another person.

The disciple therefore begins to ask, *"Who can I help with what Jesus Christ has taught me?"* Truth received personally can become truth shared faithfully with someone else.

Truth Multiplied

Paul's instruction did not stop with Timothy teaching others. Those faithful people were to become *"able to teach others also."*

This is spiritual multiplication. The goal is not to create permanent dependence upon one teacher, but to help believers become strong enough in Jesus Christ and His Word that they can eventually help someone else.

This creates a continuing pattern:

- Truth is received;
- Truth is understood;
- Truth is lived;
- Truth is shared;
- Truth continues through others.

Disciple-making therefore reaches beyond one relationship. One believer helps another grow, and that growing disciple eventually becomes able to help someone else.

Faithful People

Paul did not tell Timothy simply to pass truth to anyone without thought. He told him to commit it *"to faithful men."*

Faithfulness matters because the truth of God must be handled carefully. A disciple who receives truth also accepts responsibility for how that truth is understood, lived and shared.

A faithful disciple:

- Values the Word of God;
- Seeks to live what is taught;

- Remains teachable;
- Handles Scripture honestly;
- Passes truth on without changing it to suit personal ideas.

The aim is not simply to produce more teachers. The aim is to produce faithful disciples who know the Word, live the truth and handle what God has given responsibly.

Discipleship Works Through Relationship

Truth is often passed effectively through relationships where believers can learn and grow together. Discipleship provides opportunities to ask questions, discuss Scripture and encourage one another towards obedience.

Believers can read the Word together and pray together. They can also discuss difficult verses, encourage faithfulness and share how Jesus Christ is working in their lives.

Solomon wrote in **Ecclesiastes 4:9**:

> *"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour."*

Walking with another believer can help prevent isolation and encourage perseverance. Discipleship therefore does not need to become complicated.

It may begin with two people opening the Bible together and sincerely asking, *"What does the Word of God say, and how should we live it?"* From that simple beginning, understanding and spiritual growth can develop.

Pass On What You Have Received

The disciple should never think that the truth received is only for personal benefit. What Jesus Christ teaches us should make us increasingly useful in helping others.

We learn so that we can help someone else learn, and we grow so that we can help someone else grow. We are strengthened so that we can strengthen others.

Truth received should become truth lived, truth shared and truth multiplied. What begins in one disciple can continue through many others when the truth is passed faithfully.

This is the pattern Paul gave Timothy, and it remains one of the clearest principles of disciple-making. Receive the truth faithfully, live it honestly and pass it on to others who will do the same.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why should truth be entrusted to faithful people who can teach others?

Personal Reflection

Have you kept useful teaching to yourself?

Action Step

Is there a truth you understand but have not shared with someone who could benefit? What has held you back, and how will you pass it on humbly without creating dependence upon yourself?

DAILY PRACTICES OF A DISCIPLE

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Discipleship is not built only through major decisions or occasional moments of spiritual strength. It is strengthened through daily habits of faithfulness.

Several practices help keep the disciple close to Jesus Christ: prayer, Scripture, witness, service and love. These are not empty religious routines, but practical ways in which the life of Christ is expressed day by day.

Prayer

Prayer keeps the disciple dependent upon God. We do not become spiritually strong by relying upon ourselves, but remain close to Jesus Christ through continual fellowship with Him.

Paul wrote in **1 Thessalonians 5:17**:

> *"Pray without ceasing."*

Prayer should become part of the daily life of the disciple rather than something reserved only for times of trouble. We continually bring our needs, decisions, thanksgiving and concerns before Jesus Christ.

Scripture

The Word of God feeds, corrects and strengthens the disciple. Regular contact with Scripture keeps our thinking grounded in truth and helps us understand how Jesus Christ would have us live.

Paul wrote in **2 Timothy 3:16**:

> *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"*

The disciple reads, studies and meditates upon the Word. We allow Scripture to correct our thinking and guide the way we live.

The Word must remain central because discipleship must remain grounded in truth. What we believe and how we live should continually be brought into agreement with what God has spoken.

Witness

A disciple should also live as a witness of Jesus Christ. Witness includes what we say, but it also includes the way we live.

Our conduct should support our testimony. People should be able to see that the truth we profess has affected our choices, attitudes and relationships.

A faithful witness points others towards Jesus Christ rather than towards self. Our words and life should agree in bearing testimony to Him.

Service

Service reflects the humility of Jesus Christ. The disciple does not live only to receive, but becomes willing to use what God has entrusted for the good of others.

We look for opportunities to help people and strengthen the body of Christ. Service keeps discipleship practical because it turns love into action.

The opportunity may be large or small. What matters is that the disciple develops a willing heart that looks for ways to serve rather than continually expecting to be served.

Love

Love gives meaning to every other practice. Without love, even good spiritual activities can lose their proper purpose.

Prayer without love can become routine, while Bible study without love can become pride. Witness without love can become argument, and service without love can become duty.

Jesus said in **John 13:35**:

> *"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*

Love should therefore govern the entire life of the disciple. It shapes the way we pray, study, witness, serve and treat other people.

Daily Faithfulness Produces Strength

These practices may seem simple, but they are important. A disciple who prays, remains in the Word, lives as a witness, serves others and walks in love develops consistency.

Spiritual strength is often formed through ordinary faithfulness repeated day after day. The disciple continues walking with Jesus Christ through the regular choices and practices of daily life.

The goal is not to perform religious duties in order to earn God's favour. The goal is to remain close to Jesus Christ and allow His life within us to shape the way we live every day.

Daily discipleship therefore means continuing faithfully in the things that keep us centred upon Him. These practices help the life already received in Jesus Christ become increasingly visible in the way we live.

Prayer keeps us dependent. Scripture keeps us grounded. Witness keeps us outward-looking. Service keeps us humble. Love keeps everything centred in Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do daily practices sustain following Christ?

Personal Reflection

Which practice has become occasional or simply formal?

Action Step

What daily practice has become irregular or only outward? Why, and how will you renew it as an expression of Christ's life within rather than a means of earning approval?

PUTTING DISCIPLESHIP INTO PRACTICE

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Discipleship is not intended to remain theoretical. What we learn from Jesus Christ should become something we practise and eventually share with others.

The disciple should therefore begin looking for practical opportunities to help someone else grow. What we have received from Jesus Christ can become a means of strengthening another person.

Paul wrote in **2 Timothy 2:2**:

> *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."*

The principle is clear. Truth is received, truth is lived, truth is shared and truth is passed on.

Begin With the People Around You

Disciple-making does not always begin with a formal programme. It may begin through a simple relationship with someone Jesus Christ has already placed around us.

You may know someone who:

- Wants to understand the Bible;
- Is new in the faith;
- Needs encouragement;
- Has questions about Jesus Christ;
- Would benefit from studying Scripture with someone else.

Begin by being available and showing genuine interest in that person. Pray for them, listen to them and look for opportunities to help.

Read the Word together and share what Jesus Christ has taught you. At the same time, encourage them to search the Scriptures for themselves and become personally established in truth.

Walk With People

Discipleship becomes stronger when believers walk together. Truth can then be discussed and applied within the ordinary circumstances of life.

Solomon wrote in **Ecclesiastes 4:9**:

> *"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour."*

Practical discipleship may include:

- Meeting regularly to read Scripture;
- Praying together;
- Discussing questions honestly;
- Encouraging obedience;
- Sharing testimonies;
- Supporting one another through difficulties.

The purpose is not to make another person dependent upon us. The purpose is to help them become stronger in Jesus Christ.

As the person grows, they should become increasingly able to understand the Word, follow Jesus Christ personally and eventually help someone else. Healthy discipleship always points the person towards greater dependence upon Christ.

Start With What You Know

You do not need to know everything before helping someone. Begin with the truth Jesus Christ has already taught you and share it faithfully.

If you know how to pray, help someone learn to pray. If you have learned how to study Scripture, show someone how to study the Word for themselves.

If Jesus Christ has taught you something important, share that truth faithfully. Be honest about what you do not yet understand and continue studying rather than pretending to have every answer.

We continue learning while helping others learn. The disciple-maker remains a disciple and continues growing in Jesus Christ while helping someone else grow.

Discipleship Should Become Natural

Disciple-making should not feel like an artificial requirement added to the Christian life. It should grow naturally from love for Jesus Christ and genuine concern for others.

The disciple begins to notice opportunities and consider who may need encouragement. We become more aware of people who need help understanding the Word or someone willing to walk alongside them in faith.

We begin asking, *"Who can I encourage? Who can I help understand the Word? Who can I walk alongside in faith?"* These questions move discipleship from study into daily life.

We follow Jesus Christ ourselves, and then we become willing to help someone else follow Him. As that person grows, they can eventually become able to do the same for another.

We follow Jesus Christ, and as opportunities arise, we help others follow Him also.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How can you begin disciple-making with someone already near you?

Personal Reflection

What practical step have you delayed?

Action Step

Have you delayed helping someone follow Christ because you felt unprepared? What can you faithfully offer now, and when will you take that first step?

CONCLUSION: FOLLOW CHRIST AND HELP OTHERS FOLLOW HIM

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Discipleship is not simply a subject to study. It is the Christian life. To be a disciple is to learn from Jesus Christ, follow Him faithfully, allow His truth to transform us and help others grow in Him.

Throughout this Study Guide, we have seen that discipleship begins with the call *"Follow me."* Jesus Christ calls us to surrender self, remain in His Word, walk in obedience and allow His life within us to shape our character.

But discipleship does not stop with personal growth. What we receive from Jesus Christ should eventually become something that helps another person follow Him.

Paul wrote in **2 Timothy 2:2**:

> *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."*

This verse gives us the continuing pattern: truth received, truth lived, truth shared and truth passed on. What begins in one disciple should eventually help strengthen another.

Follow Christ Faithfully

The first responsibility of every disciple is to continue following Jesus Christ. We remain learners because there is never a time when we no longer need His Word, His wisdom or His direction.

We continue in His Word and prayer. We serve, walk in love, receive correction and continue growing in the truth.

The disciple never reaches a place where learning from Jesus Christ is no longer necessary. We remain His disciples throughout the whole Christian life.

Help Others Follow Him

As we grow, we should also become able to help others. Disciple-making does not always require a formal programme or a recognised ministry position.

It may begin simply by praying with someone or opening the Scriptures together. We may encourage someone who is struggling, share what Jesus Christ has taught us or walk alongside another believer as that person grows.

The purpose is never to make people followers of ourselves. The purpose is to help them become stronger followers of Jesus Christ.

Healthy discipleship continually directs people towards Him. As they grow, they should become stronger in His Word, more established in truth and increasingly able to follow Him faithfully for themselves.

The Life Continues Through Others

This is how truth continues from one generation of believers to the next. One disciple learns and lives the truth, then helps another person understand and live that same truth.

That disciple then grows and becomes able to help someone else. In this way, the life and truth received from Jesus Christ continue through faithful disciples.

Discipleship is therefore not a programme that ends when a lesson is completed. It is a life that continues through faithful relationships as believers help one another follow Jesus Christ.

The challenge is simple: Keep following Jesus Christ. Keep growing in His Word. Keep living what He teaches. When opportunity comes, help someone else do the same.

This is the continuing calling of a disciple. We follow Jesus Christ ourselves, and as He teaches and strengthens us, we become able to help others follow Him.

Follow Jesus Christ faithfully, and help others follow Him also.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do faithful following and helping others follow belong together?

Personal Reflection

What needs to change in both your own obedience and your care for others?

Action Step

Look at your own obedience and care for others. What needs to change in each, and how will you build a continuing pattern of following Jesus and helping someone else?

SUBMISSION TO COGMA FOR APPRAISAL

Instructions

Complete this section after you have finished the Study Guide. It must be completed online.

The link is located at the bottom of the online Study Guide — https://cogma.com.au/study-guides/

Your answers should reflect your understanding, your personal response, and how you intend to live by the truth you have studied. Answer honestly and be specific.

1. Main Truth

How do Christ's call to follow Him and His command to make disciples shape both a disciple's own life and care for others?

2. Understanding

What is the difference between learning about Jesus and following Him through changed conduct, costly obedience, love, and service? Give an example.

3. Personal Reflection

Which cost of following Christ have you been reluctant to accept, and what does that reveal about your present loyalty?

4. Response to Truth

How will Christ's example of love and service change the way you guide another person? Explain what you will do as well as what you will say.

5. Action Step

Is fear, hesitation or self-interest keeping you from helping someone follow Christ? Whom will you encourage, what must change in your attitude, and what will you do and when?

6. Early Response

Have you begun encouraging the person identified in Question 5? If yes, explain what you did and how your attitude or conduct changed. If not, explain what has prevented you from beginning.

7. Ongoing Practice

What continuing habits of teaching, prayer, shared life, and accountability will help you follow Christ while helping someone else follow Him?

8. Doctrinal Clarity

Why do evangelism and discipleship belong together, and why does the Great Commission require teaching people to observe Christ's commands rather than only securing an initial response?

9. Living the Truth

How will you pass on a specific truth to a faithful person through teaching, example, encouragement, and correction in a real relationship?

10. Final Response

After studying Following Christ and Making Disciples, how will you follow Jesus more faithfully and help another person become a fruitful disciple?