

A photograph of footprints in sand, with a large, clear footprint in the foreground and a smaller one further back, leading towards the top left. The sand is light-colored and textured.

Helping People Follow Jesus

East Taieri Presbyterian Church

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Welcome to this series of studies. I hope that you get a lot out of them.

They can be used in conjunction with the book Making Disciples like Jesus. These four studies parallel the first four chapter in that book.

It is strongly recommended that you go through the studies by yourself before you meet as a group. Pray and study asking God to reveal wonderful things to you.

Then, when you do meet, you will be able to share the insights God has given people rather than just start your thinking.

Each study follows the following sequence:

- Observe
 - This is just about noticing the facts. Look carefully at what the Bible actually says. We are not yet interpreting it – just noticing it.
 - This is the “What?” question.
- Understand
 - What is the meaning and significance of what you have observed?
 - This is the “So what?” question.
- Apply
 - We are to be “doers of the word” (James 1:22). How will you put this teaching into action?
 - This is the “What now?” question.

There are resources on disciple-making at <https://sites.google.com/view/disciple-making/home>

1. What Is Our Mission?

What has the Master commanded?

Introductory Question

1. If the government declared that churches could do only one thing, what one thing would you want your church to do?

Observe

What does the Bible actually say?

The Great Commission

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age.

Matthew 28:18-20

2. List the things you notice about what this passage says.

Do not worry just yet about what this passage means. Just observe what it says.

3. There are four verbs in Jesus' command (vv.19-20a). Underline them.

One of those verbs is the actual command (the imperative). Three of them are participles that support the main command. Which do you think is the actual command? How can you tell?

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4. Write down the first and last statements in this passage – the statements that bracket the actual commission.

The New Testament Church

Pentecost

5. Briefly summarise what happened on the Day of Pentecost and immediately after (Acts 2)

Paul

²⁸He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. ²⁹To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

Colossians 1:28-29

6. Jot down what you notice about what this passage says.

Understand

The Great Commission

7. What is the significance of the fact that “make disciples” is the command the disciples were given?

8. The participles are Jesus' teaching on *how* to make disciples. What is the practical significance of each one?

- Go
- Baptise
- Teach them to obey

9. Is the Great Commission a command for all Christians or was it more specifically for the eleven disciples? Give reasons for your answer.

The New Testament Church

Pentecost

10. What is the evidence that, at the very first opportunity, the disciples knew they were to make disciples?

Paul

11. What do you think “fully mature in Christ” would look like (Colossians 1:28-29)?

Apply

12. What do you believe God is saying to you?

13. What is one specific thing you will do this week as a result of what God is saying?

Memory verses

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age.

Matthew 28:18-20

2. What Does A Disciple Look Like?

Becoming Like The Master

Review

1. What, for you, was the main point of last week's study?
2. What did you say last week that you were going to do as a result of the study?

How did you get on? Are there ways that others could help you?

3. Test each other on last week's memory verse.

Introductory Question

4. Think of someone you know, or knew, whom you consider a "real Christian". What were that person's main characteristics?

Observe

5. Look again at the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20. What does it say about the person being discipled?
6. Jesus called the first four disciples saying...

"Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of people"

Matthew 4:19

What does that invitation say about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus?

The word “disciple” (and its Greek equivalent, mathetes) literally means a student - not a student of a topic but a student of a person. Maybe a better word would be “follower” or ‘apprentice”. Jesus adopted (but also adapted) the model of a rabbi with his school of disciples.

7. Consider Luke 6:40

The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.

What was the objective of this rabbinic training?

8. Consider Ephesians 4:11-13

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Why has Jesus given these leaders to the church?

9. What is the purpose of God’s people serving? Make a list from these verses.

10. How is Christian maturity described in this passage?

There are many passages¹ that say that the goal of our growth as Christians is Christ-likeness. For extra credit (😊) you could study them to see God’s emphasis on Christ-likeness.

¹ E.g. Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 15:49; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:11-15; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 John 2:5b-6, 4:17

Understand

11. Given what we have seen, what do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of the following definition?

A disciple is a student of Jesus, learning from Him, and being transformed by the Holy Spirit, to be like Him in thought, character and actions.

12. Think of the original twelve disciples. In what ways do you see that that definition fits them?

13. Write down as many words as you can that describe Jesus. (Your group could build a master list.)

14. From that list, which words would you not want to also see in a follower of Jesus?

15. Imagine a church in which a good number of people were like Jesus in thought, character and actions. Describe what you think the life of that church would be like.

Apply

16. What do you believe God is saying to you?

17. What is one specific thing you will do this week as a result of what God is saying?

18. If we are to be like Jesus, should the list of Jesus' characteristics be our "curriculum"?

19. Practically, how would we develop those qualities in each other (e.g. how would you nurture faith in a younger Christian)?

Memory verse

The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.

Luke 6:40

3. How Jesus Made Disciples

The Method The Master Modelled

Review

1. What, for you, was the main point of last week's study?
2. What did you say last week that you were going to do as a result of the study?

How did you get on? Are there ways that others could help you?

3. Test each other one the two memory verses we have had.

Introductory Question

4. Has an older Christian ever taken you under his/her wing specifically to help you grow to Christian maturity?

If so, what methods did he/she use to grow you?

Observe

5. Read the following passages and list the methods Jesus used to grow the disciples.

Mark 6:30-44

Matthew 16:13-28

Understand

6. What other training methods did Jesus use with the disciples?

7. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Jesus training methods?

8. Consider the following. What would you add, subtract or change?

The disciple-making principles that Jesus modelled are:

1. Intentionality
2. Relationships (more than programmes)
3. Select a few
4. Lead from conception to maturity (growth stages)
5. Train on-the-job (model, instruct, reflect, imitate)
6. Invest heavily
7. Commission them to repeat the process

9. Do you agree with the following quote? Why or why not?

“... the method of training and producing Christian leaders is first to understand the method of Christ and then to put it into faithful and productive practice.” (P.T. Chandapilla, The Master-Trainer, 1974, page x)

Apply

10. What do you believe God is saying to you?

How closely are you imitating what Jesus modelled?

11. What is one specific thing you will do this week as a result of what God is saying?

Memory verses

¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

John 13:15-17

4. Making 21st Century Disciples

Following The Way Of The Master

Review

1. What, for you, was the main point of last week's study?
2. What did you say last week that you were going to do as a result of the study?

How did you get on? Are there ways that others could help you?

3. Test each other on the three memory verses we have had.

Introduction

Although we will look at how we can make disciples in the 21st century, we will start by looking at the New Testament church. Did they understand Jesus to have modelled a method they were to imitate? If so, should we also imitate Jesus?

Introductory Question

4. If a person (or a church) was really intentional about making disciples, what would he/she/it do?

Observe

5. Read Acts 18:27-19:12. List the disciple-making techniques that you observe.

6. V.10 says that everyone in Asia heard the word of the Lord as a result of Paul staying in Ephesus for 2 years. If Paul was stationary, how did the message spread so widely?

7. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:7b-12. Again, list the ways Paul grew these disciples.

Understand

8. In these passages, and others you can think of, in what ways do you see the early church imitating Jesus' disciple-making methods? (Refer back to the list you made, and the 7 principles, in the last study.)

9. What do you think Paul meant when he said, "We loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well" (1 Thess 2:8)?

10. Do you think that we have improved on Jesus' methods? In what ways?

11. Are we getting better results than Jesus and the early church did? Why or why not?

Apply

12. What do you believe God is saying to you?

13. What is one specific thing you will do this week as a result of what God is saying?

14. What would you like your church to do so as to be more intentional and more effective in making disciples?

Memory verses

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of people."

Matthew 4:19