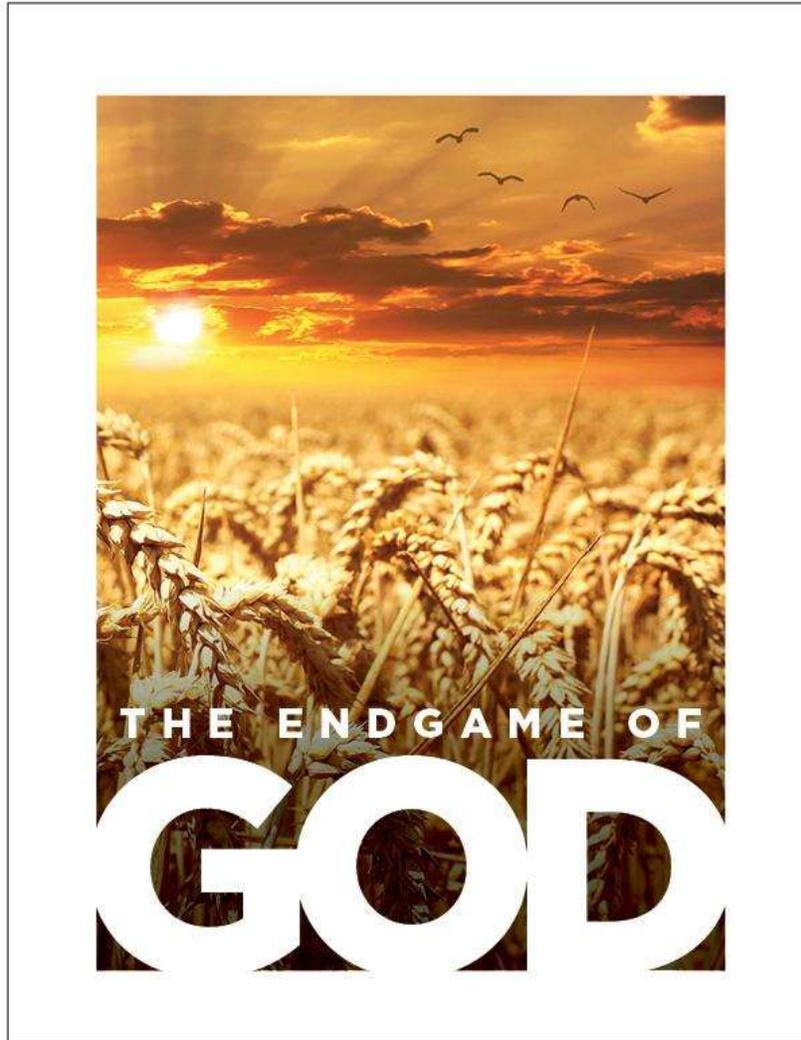


The Endgame of God

The New Wineskin Training Program
of Jesus to Disciple the Nations

Kurt Olson



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Our Mission:

Go Multiply exists to finish the Great Commission by launching Disciple-Making Movements in every nation and among every people group on Earth.

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ENDORSEMENT

The Endgame of God unveils the divine strategy to speedily complete the Great Commission. Simple, scalable and unstoppable, the principles and practices in The Endgame call us to go from sequential to simultaneous disciple making. Brother Kurt challenges us to move beyond fishing only with hooks to deploying nets; from the one-man, superstar model of ministry to equipping every believer to make disciples from every platform. The Endgame's power lies in the fact that it is scriptural and proven; it shows how to make and multiply genuine disciples. It is written by a Christ-follower and a dear friend who has lived out its truths. I most heartily recommend this book and its training program. May God use it to multiply obedient disciples of Christ in the nations.

Dr. Ferdinand Nweke

General Coordinator, Eternity Ministries & Africa Coordinator, Global Great Commission Network

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Introduction

Wherever I go to train disciples and launch movements, people tell me their training in first-century biblical discipleship is life-changing. I have been asked repeatedly to put the training in book form so that people can have something to reference after I leave. I began writing this book in 2019 and never expected it to take four years to complete. In all honesty, when COVID happened (followed by all the other things on the world stage after that), I felt compelled to pause this writing while I assessed what was happening and how it related to the biblical timeline of the end of this age.

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I chose this title because I am convinced and have seen firsthand what Jesus is doing worldwide. I am convinced that the church of Jesus Christ will finish off the same way it started: **in the powerful simplicity** of obedient disciples making more obedient disciples! May the Lord direct your path to live the rest of your days in that powerful simplicity for the glory of God. I personally believe that we are living in the last days of this age. I also believe that the current world leaders could be the beast system of Revelation. And I believe that we will see Jesus return in our lifetimes. Take a moment and ask yourself how that thought makes you feel. Does the thought of Jesus returning excite you or scare you?

Once, while conducting our training in a grade school library in my home state, a trainee shared what she was learning with a friend. That friend said, "It sounds to me like these people are trying to speed up the return of Christ." When she shared that with the group the following day, I said, "We are!"

In 2 Peter 3:11-12, Peter addresses his audience by saying we ought to "look forward to the day of God and speed its coming." Does that describe you? Do you look forward to the day Jesus returns? And, if so, do you live in such a way that you speed the return of Christ? If your answer is "no" to either of those questions, my next question would be, "Do you want to?" Because, it IS POSSIBLE to structure your life so that you look forward to Jesus' return, speed His coming, and live the greatest impact on eternity possible through your surrendered life!

Two thousand years ago, the apostle John wrote in 1 John 2:18 that "it is the last hour." Well, if it was the last hour 2000 years ago, what time is it now? Is it the last five minutes? Or even the last minute of this age?

Most people I speak to agree that we are in the last days. And if that is true, then we have a tribulation to go through to get to the end of the age. Are you prepared to go through it? And HOW will you go through it? Will you be like a scared child hiding and attempting to protect your own life at all costs? Or will you go through it like an invincible warrior who can't be defeated with the mandate of your commander as your driving motivation and the power of the Creator of the Universe as your weapon?!

From this moment onward, there are only two ways for you to enter eternity: #1 is death and #2 is life! Revelation 12:11 says, "They did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death." Do you shrink from death? Do I? This passage is speaking of believers who are overcoming the Antichrist by dying DURING the tribulation. But there are also those who will be alive at the return of Christ! Those who will see Him coming on the clouds will be gathered to meet Him in the air and transformed into eternal, immortal beings without experiencing death!

So, the question isn't whether or not you will meet God. The question is, "How will you live until you meet God?" Ask yourself, "If every Christian operated the way I operate, how long will it be until the gospel is preached to all nations?" Is the honest answer "never"?

I pray that by applying what you read in this book, you will live as an obedient, undefeatable, multiplying follower of Jesus Christ right up until the moment you find yourself standing face-to-face with the ultimate, powerful, loving Creator of the Universe!

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A NOTE OF CAUTION

Please only read this book if you are willing to have your spiritual and religious paradigms challenged. In this book, you will learn things that you cannot unlearn. You cannot unread the things you will read in this book. With knowledge comes responsibility. It has been said that ignorance is bliss. If you don't want to be held accountable or responsible by God for the knowledge and the truths that are contained in this book, then put it down and don't pick it up again until you are actually ready to be held responsible by God for the things you will discover on these pages.

But if you are willing and ready to be used by God to have your life impact eternity and the eternal destiny of souls to the greatest possible extent, then read on, be transformed, and live the rest of your life as an eternal agent of change in the lives of others for the advancement of the Kingdom of God!

When you boil it down, Jesus' plan to disciple the world is simply the multiplication of obedient disciples. Right now, all over the planet, God is restoring the powerful simplicity of the original design of the New Testament church. I believe it is needed for these last days because it is the only way to finish the Great Commission. Jesus' disciples are rapidly multiplying all over the world today! God is doing this. Will you join Him?

It just makes sense that if you and I are going to be used by God to our greatest potential and have the most significant impact on eternity, then we must do **Jesus' work Jesus' way!** Suppose we continue to do our spiritual work man's way (building religious buildings and making passive, spectator Christian church members). In that case, we can expect to continue to see human effort's poor and dismal results!

A popular definition of insanity is doing the same things over and over again but expecting a different result. But isn't that exactly what we are doing in the building-based church system? If we want a different result, we will need a different strategy. If the traditional church system keeps doing what it has always done, it will never finish the Great Commission. When you compare population growth with traditional church growth, discipling the world is a fallacy unless we change our operating system.

We can only expect a different result if we are willing to change what we do and how we do it. And most certainly, if we do what Jesus modeled, taught, and commanded, we will obtain the results that Jesus intends. And those results are nothing less than the discipling of the whole world!

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Chapter 1: My Story

After chasing the pleasures of this life for a number of years and coming to the point of considering suicide, I cried out to God, and He rescued me and saved my soul. I surrendered my life to the Lord Jesus in 1987, at the age of 21. Later that same year, I met a young lady named Carrie, who became my friend and ministry helper. She surrendered her life to Christ in 1989 and became a saved, born-again follower of Jesus Christ. We were engaged that same year and married a year later. In our 30+ years together, God has blessed us with five sons, two daughters-in-law, and three grandchildren as of this writing.

After spending seven years in traditional church ministry (Carrie did youth ministry for two years), in the 1990's we felt called to church planting. So, while preparing for church planting and studying the practices of the early church, I spent seven years working as a carpenter and fourteen years as an independent (commission-only) salesman. God used this time to teach us to live by faith in preparation for what we thought would be traditional church planting. The Lord had other plans and led us to launch this ministry instead.

Since launching in 2014, God has used our trainees to lead hundreds of thousands of lost souls and passive Christians to become reproducing, obedient disciples of Jesus! They continue to multiply around the world to this day.

Bible Charades

Looking back, it seems like Jesus placed a call on my life to discipleship even before I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ and became born again. I grew up in a religious home and a religious tradition that didn't emphasize discipleship or even being born again. So, when I was sixteen or seventeen years old, I was the president of the church youth group while at the same time, I was chasing after the things of the world. I was interested in things like drugs, rock music, girls, alcohol, fast cars, and rebellion against authority.

One evening our church youth group was playing Bible charades where one person was trying to act out a Bible passage while the others tried to guess the verse.

Now, at this point in my life, I had made zero effort to intentionally memorize any Bible verses. As the game progressed, someone was given a verse to act out, and they pointed their finger away from themselves, and someone said, "go." Instantly, the entire verse dropped into my mind. Before I knew what was happening, the words flowed out of my mouth. I said, "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

I couldn't believe it. Neither could anyone else in the room. For a moment, everyone just stood and stared at me in what I can only assume was a bit of disbelief and amazement that I (the bad kid) knew any Scripture at all. I was the most amazed of all. I didn't even know that that passage was in my mind or how it got there.

Chapel Talk

When I was 21 years old, I surrendered my life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. My parents had sent me to a religious school in our denomination from preschool through twelfth grade (fourteen years by my count). So, after becoming born again, I immediately joined a youth ministry training program (because I was sure I was supposed to spend my life in the service of the Lord Jesus), and I—mistakenly—thought that working in the traditional church system would be the best way to do that. Once I completed the training, I was given the opportunity to serve the Lord as the youth minister at a church in my denomination in a neighboring state.

I was invited to speak at a chapel service in the high (secondary) school I had graduated from. When I went to speak, they asked for the message title, and I told them, "Are You a Christian or a Disciple?" That "just happened" to be the thing that was on my mind in my first year of truly following the Lord Jesus Christ. From early on, the Lord showed me the difference between being a "Christian" and being a true follower or "disciple" of Jesus Christ.

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About 200 students and staff were in attendance, and I asked them, “How many of you consider yourself a Christian?” All 200 hands went up. Then I asked them, “How many of you consider yourself a “disciple of Jesus Christ?” Only about five hands went up.

I couldn't believe it. I was amazed that in a religious high school, the majority of the staff and students did not understand that everyone who follows Christ is supposed to be a disciple and that the word “Christian” was just a nickname that was given to those who were already disciples (Acts 11:26). In other words, in the Bible, there is no such thing as a Christian who is not a disciple of Jesus. In the Bible, a person is either a disciple of Jesus Christ or they are lost!

17 Years a “Church Planter”?

As mentioned earlier, I felt a call to church planting. So for seventeen years, I read books, watched video trainings, and went to a church planter's assessment to prepare to “plant a church.” In my personal study, the Holy Spirit led me to study the practices of the New Testament church.

I strongly desired to understand why the early disciples had so much power and influence and were accused of “turning the world upside-down.” In contrast, the church system I had been raised in and worked in had very little power or influence, and wasn't turning much of anything upside-down.

To me, the religious systems of today seemed to operate more like the business of religion than they resembled the early church. In many cases, it seemed like the church system of today existed so that it could continue to exist. It did not appear to be in the business of making genuine disciples of Jesus or taking new ground for the Kingdom of God.

2010 - A Word From The Lord

In 2010, Carrie and I were visiting a small church gathering near our home. We didn't know many people so we sat in the back. The leaders of this church had invited a guest preacher from India named S.R. Manohar. This man has an evangelistic, prophetic, and healing ministry called Rays of Love. We'd never seen or heard of this man before that day.

After he gave the morning message, he walked around the small gathering space praying. Then he did something very strange. He stepped into the row where Carrie and I were sitting and stopped directly in front of me. Now, I'd never seen this man before and there was no way he knew me. Yet he looked down at me and made a very interesting statement. He simply said, “God has given you the keys to the Kingdom. Doors that have been closed will be opened and doors that have been opened will be closed.” Then he walked away.

We had no idea what that meant at the time, but as we look back over what God has done in the past ten years in this ministry, we are beginning to understand what He meant.

2012 - God Shows Up

Kneeling down next to the fireplace early one morning in May of 2012, I was praying about church planting and asking God what I was missing. I said, “Lord, if there is a book, conference, training, or anything else I still need, please show me what it is, and I will do it.” Essentially I was asking the Lord, “If You want me to plant a church, what's missing? What are You waiting for?” And in one of those rare moments when you feel like God speaks back to you, I had a strong response in my mind. The Voice in my head said, **“I NEVER TOLD ANYONE TO PLANT A CHURCH!”**

I was stunned and shocked and said, “Lord, how can you say that? This is America; there are churches everywhere!” Another strong response came into my mind: **“THAT'S TRUE, BUT IF YOU LOOK IN MY BOOK, YOU WILL NOT FIND A COMMAND TO PLANT CHURCHES!”** He wasn't finished. He went on to make a powerful statement that changed my life forever. May it change yours as well. He continued, **“I TOLD YOU TO ‘MAKE DISCIPLES’! I ALSO SAID, ‘I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH.’ LET'S KEEP THAT CLEAR!”**

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I was blown away. Do you see the significance of that statement? It's as if He was telling me to stop trying to do His job - which is to build His church - and to start doing my job, which is to make disciples of Jesus!

I felt like He was lovingly telling me to "stay in my lane." Like He was saying, "**You make disciples, and I will take those disciples and make church out of them.**"

I was in shock. Can you imagine? After seventeen years of thinking I would plant a church, God derailed my train! But, I'm glad He did because I was on the wrong track! Maybe you are too. About two weeks after that encounter, I yielded and said, "Okay, if you just want me to make disciples, then show me where, how, and with whom, and I'll do it." Oh, how He answered that prayer! Our life has never been the same.

If I'm being honest, I felt like I had been demoted. I felt like I had been planning to plant a grand and glorious church (trumpets, please), but instead, now I was JUST going to be making disciples. Well, nothing could be further from the truth. Rather than being demoted, I was given the privilege of making disciples and launching movements of disciples all over the world!

When I said, "Okay, I'll do it," everything in our life began to change. And I suspect that if you say the same thing to God, your life will never be the same either. Just say, "God, I yield myself to making Your disciples. Please show me how, where, and with whom, and I'll do it." Try it and see what happens. I dare you.

2012 Through Today

Within just days of surrendering to the idea of simply making disciples, I received an email about Disciple-Making Movements (DMM). The email spoke of miracles happening like we see in the book of Acts. It talked of entire Muslim mosques and whole Muslim villages embracing Jesus as Lord and Savior in groups! It spoke of ordinary people becoming disciples who were discipling other everyday, ordinary people, and God was doing miracles through them.

I was skeptical that these things could be true, so I purchased and read the book mentioned in the email, *Miraculous Movements* by Jerry Trousdale. The book mentioned a man, Dave, who had been on the ground in Africa and had seen these things firsthand but was now living and working in California. It even gave the name of the organization where Dave was working at the time (thank you, God, for Google).

I immediately Googled the company's name, found the phone number, and dialed. A live person answered, and I asked for Dave. She said, "Just a moment," and placed me on hold. As my palms were sweating, a voice came on the line, "Hello, this is Dave." I launched right in. I said, "Hi Dave, my name is Kurt, and I just finished reading *Miraculous Movements*, and I'm having a hard time believing what I'm reading. Is all this true? And if it is, how can I get involved in this movement myself?" (deep breath)

Dave replied, "Yes, it's all true, and there is so much more that we couldn't put in the book." Then he asked, "Where do you live?" I said, "Wisconsin," and He said, "Great! We will be conducting a training in Minnesota (our neighboring state) in six months. You should come."

So, six months later, my wife, a pastor friend, and I drove to Minnesota to participate in a three-day DMM training hosted by men who had been on the ground and seen these things firsthand in Africa. What a joy that was. I was obviously quite enthusiastic about what I was learning, and the trainers noticed that.

The following year, Carrie and I hosted a training in Wisconsin. I was asked to participate as one of the trainers in several DMM trainings in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Then, through a series of little miracles, God connected me to a man from Pakistan who wanted me to train Pakistani refugees in Thailand and middle-eastern workers. So, in an attempt to follow where Jesus was leading, off I went.

When we were doing the training in the Middle East, I was surprised that our training was held at a different location each day. When I asked my host why we weren't meeting in the same place each day, he said, "That's so they can't find us." I said, "Who can't find us?" He said, "The Islamic radicals who would not want us holding a training on how to multiply disciples of Jesus." Until that moment, I had no idea that my first overseas training was being held in a Sharia

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law state where what we were doing was both dangerous and illegal. And that is how our international disciple-making ministry began.

Through another series of little miracles, I was invited to conduct the training in northwest Kenya. It began when I started talking to a man from Kenya on LinkedIn about what the word “church” means to Jesus. (Have you ever thought about that? What does Jesus think when he hears the word “church”? Or what did He have in mind when He used the word “church”?) As our discussion on LinkedIn progressed, this man requested that I come and train in Kenya. At this point, I had never been to Africa, and I was not yet willing to fly halfway around the world to meet a man I didn’t know and do this training. Would you?

As God would have it, about the same time, I was invited to speak about discipleship in northern Wisconsin at a retreat for Native Americans. They asked me to speak for about 45 minutes on DMM and how God is restoring the powerful simplicity of the early church all over the world today.

Afterward, an African man approached me and said, “You must come to Kampala, Uganda and teach this.” This African pastor was well-known to my northern Wisconsin hosts, who vouched for him. Some of them had actually been to his ministry center in Uganda. They said he was an upstanding man of God and that I should not hesitate to go.

As a result, I agreed to go and train his people in Kampala, Uganda. As you might imagine, when I told the man from Kenya that I was going to be in Uganda, he practically begged me to come to train the leaders in his place. He only lived eight hours northeast of Kampala and was more than willing to drive me to or from Kampala to get the training. Since I was going to be that close, I agreed to do the training there as well. I requested that everyone fast and pray for a month before the training. They did, and God worked wonders!

The group we trained in Kenya included about 60 bishops, pastors, and elders representing a couple thousand church members. These leaders were blown away by simply learning the training program of Jesus to disciple the nations! Praise God, they saw and understood the powerful simplicity of the early church. And they began to put these things into practice in their lives and ministries! The following year, they tell me they multiplied to tens of thousands of obedient, multiplying disciples of Jesus Christ in Kenya and spilled over into the neighboring countries. Today, they number in the hundreds of thousands and are continuing to multiply in more than eight countries in East Africa! All Glory to God alone!

God is multiplying disciples all over the world today (primarily in developing or persecuted nations). I am convinced that it is God’s endgame to finish the Great Commission. Today, much of the mission world is shifting to an emphasis on true biblical first-century discipleship. Praise the Lord! May it keep increasing until the return of Christ!

Looking Ahead

Millions of genuine disciples are multiplying in countless movements in many nations all over the planet, and they don’t need me. Their leader is Jesus! If I died tomorrow, the disciples would not stop multiplying. That is because they are doing Jesus’ work Jesus’ way and therefore, are experiencing Jesus’ results. They have the word of God, the Holy Spirit, fellowship, and obedience. And that’s all they (or you and I) need to continue multiplying to the ends of the Earth until the return of Jesus.

The interest in this training and the invitations we receive are overwhelming. We have so many invitations that I could board a plane tomorrow and **never** return! This is because several more invitations arise every time I conduct this training. Therefore, I fully expect to keep launching movements of multiplying disciples until the Lord returns or takes me home.

What we need now, and will need until the return of Christ, are more trainers and obedient, multiplying disciples. We need people who are willing to go anywhere and do anything to follow Jesus’ mandate to make disciples of all nations.

COVID Lockdowns

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As I'm writing this, we have come out of COVID and the global lockdowns. Those lockdowns were quite a wake-up call for many in the ministry. I believe it was a test, and really, it was a gift from God to see how well we are genuinely helping people to mature and how prepared we are for persecution. Some African congregations that knew about DMM but still needed to implement it, barely survived the lockdowns. And only God knows how many congregations closed their doors permanently.

You may know of congregations that didn't make it through the COVID lockdowns. Many pastors and congregations really struggled to survive that season. I hope the church will be better prepared for next time.

On the other hand, a few years ago, God miraculously connected me to the founder of an international denomination that operates hundreds of locations on several continents. That leader had me train their leaders all over the world. Then, after the lockdowns, they said, "These teachings prepared us for the COVID lockdowns." God used this training! Worldwide, this denomination more than doubled DURING the lockdowns! One congregation even quadrupled!

How did your congregation fare?

That denomination thrived and multiplied to around 1,500 fellowships today because they learned how to "be the church" anywhere and everywhere. They had moved beyond just knowing how to attend church and be passive spectators on Sunday mornings.

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Chapter 2: DMM Begins: The David Watson Story

In the 1980s, a missionary named David Watson was sent to a region of India where every missionary who had ever gone there had been killed. It was the region of the Bhojpuri people in northern India. David was already a career missionary who had planted over 30 traditional churches.

The Bhojpuri people are possibly the world's most fierce and radical Hindus. But David felt that the Lord wanted him to go, so he went and began sharing the gospel and leading some people to Christ. It didn't take long for him to be arrested and expelled from the region.

Then, he trained a small team of Indians to plant churches the way he had been trained to do it. He figured they would arouse less suspicion because they looked like they belonged there. They already knew the language and the culture. So the team of Indians began sharing the gospel and leading people to Christ. Once the group was large enough, they found a building to meet in and invited people to come. People did come, but not the people they were hoping would come. The radical Hindus came and killed the entire team!

David was distraught. He had trained this team. He poured his life into them, and he loved them. For several months he went to his office and didn't even turn on the lights. He just sat in the dark and interacted with God. He said, "Lord, you appointed us to go and bear fruit that will remain. If you don't show me how to bear fruit that lasts in THIS PLACE, then I quit! I will not be Your missionary anymore."

When he said that, there was a response. He felt like the Lord said, "If you made disciples the way I made disciples, you wouldn't have these problems." That caused David to realize something. He realized that he had been interpreting the Bible through his traditional understanding of religion and church. It was as if he had been reading his Bible through religious glasses.

So he (figuratively) took off those religious glasses and began reading the Bible with a fresh perspective. David started to see things he'd never seen before. In the following year, he read his Bible six times. In that time, the Holy Spirit revealed Jesus' training program to train ordinary people to disciple nations! As the Lord revealed these things, David began to put them into practice.

For the first year, it seemed like nothing was happening. David's mission organization even threatened to fire/sack him because they said he wasn't doing his job. He asked for more time, saying, "I'm trying something new that looks like it will bear fruit." Then in the second year, there was a breakthrough. David and his team saw eight New Testament churches established among the Bhojpuri people! In year three, they saw an additional 48 churches planted! Then 100, 500, and in year six, more than 1,000 NEW churches began! Altogether, that is more than 1,600 New Testament churches in just six years.

At this point, his mission organization threatened to fire/sack him again. He asked them, "Why do you want to fire me this time? Things are going well." They said, "We aren't firing you because things are going so well. We are firing you because you are lying on your mission reports. No one can plant 1,000 churches in one year." David said, "Come and see."

So the mission organization sent representatives to investigate what David had reported. And when they analyzed his work, they discovered that this movement had actually seen more than 1,000 churches start in that 5th year. David had underreported his numbers, not over-reported them. (This story is told by David Watson in the introduction of the book *Contagious Disciple-Making* By David and Paul Watson)

Isn't that amazing? Wouldn't you like to see those same results? I believe you can, but it will involve giving up old ways and habits and replacing them with the ways of Jesus and the powerful simplicity of the early church. It will involve taking off your religious glasses, seeing what the Bible really says about living as followers of Christ, and putting those things into practice.

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God used this experience with David Watson as the inception of what is known today as Disciple Making Movements (DMM) that use Discovery Bible Study (DBS). As I type these words, DMMs have spread to hundreds of countries on six continents, with millions of reproducing disciples using DBS to multiply and grow the true church of Jesus Christ all around the world!

More DMM Development - Dave Hunt

While David Watson was developing the DBS in India, he was also sharing these things with some missionary friends in Africa who began putting them into practice with miraculous results. One of those men was a missionary named Dave Hunt (the same Dave from California that I called on the phone). While David Watson was working in India, Dave Hunt was working among Muslims in Ethiopia. Dave Hunt was also discouraged because nothing he tried had worked there, either. But then he began to apply what he learned from David Watson.

Dave Hunt found five Muslim men willing to study the Bible, apply it to their lives, and share what they were learning with others. They weren't believers. They were simply Muslims who were curious about the Bible. I've been told that if a Muslim wants to test the authenticity of a holy book, they put it into practice and see what happens. (Wouldn't it be great if the entire body of Christ tried that with the Bible?) When I met Dave Hunt in November of 2012, that group of five curious Muslim men had grown to more than 250,000 born-again, obedient, baptized, multiplying disciples of Jesus Christ. That movement continues to multiply to this day! Glory to God!

Just a couple of years after meeting Dave, I was sitting in a meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, when he entered the room and politely interrupted saying, "I've got some exciting news." We all gave him our attention, and he said, "We just recorded our 1 millionth Muslim baptism in Africa." Praise the Lord!

And this was just one ministry and they were just counting Muslims who had come to Christ. This didn't include the Hindus, the Buddhists, the Animists, the Atheists, or even the comfortable, complacent, passive spectator Christians becoming disciples of Jesus! Yet people from all these groups are becoming obedient, multiplying disciples of Jesus Christ all over Africa and the world right now!

It isn't hard to see that God is definitely up to something unprecedented in His efforts to FINISH the Great Commission in these last days. Will you join Him?

God Connects Me To Them

As I already shared, I had prepared for what I thought would be traditional church planting for about seventeen years, until one day, in my mind, I heard the Lord say, "**I never told anyone to 'plant a church.'**" I was shocked! I said, "Lord, how can you say that? There are churches all over the place." He said, "**That's true, but if you look in My book, you will not find a command to plant churches.**" I said, '**You make disciples.**' I also said, '**I will build My church.**' **Let's keep that clear.**"

So, striving to obey Jesus' command to make disciples, since 2014, we've conducted this training in many countries and seen hundreds of thousands enter the Kingdom of God as obedient, multiplying disciples of Jesus Christ. These disciples continue to multiply, around the world, to this day.

This series of events makes me think of **2 Timothy 2:2**, where Paul tells Timothy to share the things that Paul had told him with reliable people who will share those things with others. There are several levels of transfer of information in this verse. Jesus to Paul. Paul to Timothy. Timothy to reliable people. Reliable people to others.

That pattern of sharing continues to this day. The Lord showed this to David Watson; David Watson shared this information with Dave Hunt; Dave Hunt shared it with me, and now I'm sharing it with you. But don't let it end with you. Please go and share what you learn in this book with others who will share it with others. I pray you will live the rest of your life as a disciple who makes more disciples! Are you willing to do that?

I once heard David Watson say, "You can boil DMM down to three simple steps: READ the Bible, DO (obey) the Bible, and SHARE the Bible." And while that is true, it is helpful to flesh that out so we all have a clearer understanding of just what DMM is and how God is using it to restore the original blueprint of the church; how He

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wants you and me to function as His followers today; and how He is using DMM to finish the Great Commission which will lead to the return of Christ! When Christ returns, He will set up His 1000-year reign here on Earth, and you and I will rule and reign on this Earth with Him.

Two Orders From God!

“Go to the synagogues.”

While I was attending a conference in Missouri, I had the privilege of attending a meeting with some great men and women of God who had already been involved in launching these DMMs worldwide. The conversation briefly touched on the similarities between the synagogue system of Jesus’ day and the building-based Church system of our day. As that topic was discussed, the Lord spoke into my spirit. “Go to the synagogues.” And I knew what that meant. It meant, “Go to the building-based Church system and share biblical, first-century discipleship with them and the leaders.”

Honestly, that’s not what I wanted to do. I wanted to go to the lost. I wanted to go to the markets, parks, and wherever lost people were. I wanted to find people looking for God and start New Testament fellowships among them and their friends and families.

Since God directed me to go to church leaders, that’s primarily what I’ve done. It is those church leaders who have trained their congregations to make disciples and launch movements. The results have been miraculous and far beyond anything I ever imagined.

My Small Vision

When I first got involved in DMMs, I had a small vision of starting some New Testament fellowships in my village, county, and state. But God had much bigger plans.

In fact, as you read this, please take a moment to pray right now and ask the Lord to begin a multiplying movement of disciples in central Wisconsin that will spread from there to the ends of the Earth. Then begin asking Him to launch a movement through your surrendered life, starting in your location as well.

“It’s time you start telling the truth.”

A short time after that encounter in Missouri, I was praying in my home, and I had this strong impression come into my mind. I felt like the Lord said, “**It’s time you start telling the truth.**” I was a little offended. I said, “Lord, what do you mean I should start telling the truth? I’m not a liar; I do tell the truth.” The response that came to my mind was, “**You don’t always tell the whole truth.**” I felt like the Lord was saying the same thing we say in our courtrooms here in America. When a person is a witness and is sworn in before they give their testimony, they are asked, “Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you, God?” I knew what the Lord was driving at. I knew that there were things that I wasn’t putting in my training. Some things are difficult for people to hear, so I avoided those topics. But I felt the Lord was saying, “**Don’t avoid those topics. They need to hear them.**”

It’s like a doctor diagnosing a patient. The doctor doesn’t have the option to not tell them the truth. He does need to decide **how** he tells them the truth. In the same way, I will tell you some hard truths but I’ll try to present them in a way that is not too difficult to receive.

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Chapter 3: Things to Consider

- I desire that God receives the glory for what is written here and through everything that results from your consumption of this information.
- I hope and pray that you will be encouraged and excited about your part in growing Jesus' Kingdom wherever He places you for the rest of your days.
- My goal is for you to see Disciple-Making Movements as THE METHOD OF OPERATION of Jesus and the New Testament church. Disciples who make disciples, who make disciples, who make disciples **IS** Jesus' plan to disciple the world!
- I hope you'll agree that disciples making disciples who make disciples is GOD'S plan A, and there is no plan B!
- I hope you will put these things into practice in your own life.

Why Does the Modern Church Operate this Way?

For the first 300 years, the New Testament church was a multiplying movement of disciples spreading around the world.

When it arrived in Rome, Emperor Constantine made it a religion. When it arrived in Europe, they turned it into an institution. Then Europe exported it to the United States, who turned it into a business. The United States then exported it to the world as THE correct way to do Christianity and operate the church. But, as it turns out, this modern, building-based, pastor-centered business of religion that most of us were raised in is NOT how the first-century followers of Christ conducted it at all!

So, as you absorb this information, I hope and pray that you will become a disciple who makes disciples. This is not about adding more knowledge to your mind. It's about altering your spiritual practices so that you will live your life as a disciple who makes disciples. I pray you will have the greatest impact on eternity that is possible!

I strongly encourage you to go and train others. I encourage you to create your own presentation and train everyone you know.

I hope you will develop a lifestyle of biblical discipleship that includes starting groups of obedient disciples that start more groups of disciples until the return of Christ!

The growth could look something like this:

10 x 10=100
x 10 = 1000
x 10 = 10,000
x 10 = 100,000
x 10 = 1,000,000 and so on!!!!

In theory, one group of 10 disciples could disciple the entire world in just over four years if every single disciple started just one more group of ten every six months!

In real life the groups will vary in size. Some will have four people and some will have fifteen.

After reading this book, I hope and pray that you will live the rest of your life with Christ, fishing for souls with a net where you catch people in groups, not just one at a time (more on that in a bit). You are going to learn that Jesus trained His followers to fish for souls with a net and to catch them in groups.

If you are in church leadership, I hope you will FULLY embrace the original design of the ekklesia of Jesus! I pray you will abandon ALL thinking and activities that do not contribute to fulfilling the Great Commission!

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Again, our mission is to FINISH the Great Commission by launching Disciple-Making Movements in every nation and among every people group on Earth! Will you join us? Are you willing to become an obedient disciple of Jesus who makes more obedient disciples for the rest of your life, or until the return of Christ?

Spiritual Firewall (aka Security Question)

The famous man of faith, George Mueller, said, "If the Holy Spirit guides us at all, He will do it according to the Scriptures, and never contrary to them." Therefore, as we consider how to do the work of God in this world, we must operate according to the New Testament pattern and never contrary to it.

Here at Go Multiply, we suggest every disciple-maker use a spiritual firewall (security question) to ensure they are not implementing practices that are not biblical and do not lead to the fulfillment of the Great Commission. The safest thing is to keep your practices as close to those of the New Testament church as possible. Therefore, the firewall (protection) question that we recommend you use to evaluate all your spiritual practices and keep them true to the biblical model is: **Where do I see this practice in the practices of Jesus and/or the New Testament church?**

Before you do anything in your spiritual practices, ask, "Did or would Jesus or the New Testament disciples of Jesus do this?" If the answer is "no", you should seriously consider whether or not you should do it. And if the answer is "yes", you should be doing it too.

Take a minute and evaluate your current spiritual practices according to this firewall question. Are you doing things that Jesus didn't do or command and no one in the New Testament church did? If so, you should thoughtfully and prayerfully consider whether or not you should continue doing them. They may be a religious distraction that keeps you from obeying Jesus and making disciples.

A Personal Illustration

Recently, a friend of ours who has started two bible study groups called to ask if I could help clear up some confusion. In one group, they compared the Great Commission in Matthew 28, which says to "make disciples," with Acts 1:8, which says we will be Jesus' "witnesses." She asked me, "Which is it? Are we supposed to make disciples of Jesus or be witnesses of Jesus?" I said, "YES, both."

They are two different ways to say the same thing. Once a person gains a clear understanding of first-century discipleship, they will see that this whole process of following Jesus is largely a spiritual apprenticeship program of becoming like Jesus.

A Spiritual Apprenticeship Program

In a typical apprenticeship program, the apprentice's job is to learn from and become just like the master of a particular discipline—no matter if it is a plumber, electrician, brain surgeon, mechanic, carpenter, or disciple-maker.

Jesus was a perfect disciple of His Father. He only did what He saw His Father doing and only said what His Father told Him to say (John 5:19, John 14:10). We must become apprentices of Jesus in order to become like Jesus. Jesus IS the master disciple-maker. This is how we will attain "the fullness of the stature of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). We are apprentices of Jesus to become like Jesus.

I asked our friend, "Have you ever been involved in an apprenticeship program?" She said, "No, but I was raised on a farm and taught to do everything necessary to operate the farm." I replied, "Perfect, that is a great example of discipleship because if our farmers fail to properly train just one generation of farmers, they have lost the ability to farm effectively."

In the same way, if the church fails to properly disciple just one generation of Jesus' disciples, we've lost the ability to be the New Testament church (this happened in much of the church centuries ago)! Praise God because He is restoring it right now!

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Our conversation lasted about 40 minutes while I explained that people who claim to follow Jesus should resemble Him in the way they live their lives. She said, "I think I get it now." As we do what He did, we become like the person He was and is.

Simply stated, true disciples of Jesus **are** Jesus' witnesses because they live out the example of the life of Jesus! Paul said, "Imitate me as I imitate Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). A good apprentice imitates their master.

In our culture, we tend to think of making disciples as simply making more and better Christian church members. That is NOT the definition Jesus and His culture had of discipleship. Therefore, most of us need help understanding biblical discipleship. It takes a long time for people to fully comprehend what it means to be a true disciple and how to make more disciples that will continue to multiply. Jesus clearly understood what it meant to be a disciple, and so did His followers. Keep reading, and you will also gain the understanding of discipleship that Jesus and His disciples had 2000 years ago.

And whatever you do, please don't give up. This transition may be difficult and will take time, but it will be worth it! The fruit your life can produce in the simple, powerful ways of Jesus is literally beyond your wildest imagination.

Over the millennia, we have made it (church, following Jesus, religion, spirituality, etc.) much more complicated and ineffective than Jesus ever intended. Jesus said, "Unless you change and become like little children, you will never see the Kingdom of God." May we become like little children as we allow God to guide us to get back to the powerful, simple practices of the New Testament church. It's so simple that even a child can do it.

A few years ago, I was conducting this training in Pakistan for about 300 pastors and their wives from Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan during the day while also training a small team of missionaries in the evenings over dinner.

The large meeting experienced a Taliban bomb threat, so we reduced our numbers by about 75% and finished the training in a very secure location. Right after the training, my host had to flee the country, and to this day, I don't know if any of these pastors put what they learned into practice.

What I do know is that the small group of missionaries I trained during dinner applied these things and taught them to teenagers. These teens began laying their hands on the sick, and Jesus began healing them. Then they would go into the homes of those who had been healed, share the gospel and establish New Testament fellowships in those homes among their friends and families. Glory to God!

The Example of Jesus

Jesus relied on His Father, preached the gospel, prayed often, healed the sick, cast out demons, raised the dead, loved (and hung out with) sinners, and opposed spiritual pride and dead religion. He taught His disciples to do all of those same things. He operated in the power of the Spirit of God. Then, He gave us that same Spirit at Pentecost so we could literally be His examples to the world! We (all who claim to follow Jesus) are supposed to represent Jesus in and to this lost and dying world!

The Church we see in the New Testament is simply made up of obedient disciples who consistently made more obedient disciples of Jesus. They operated in the power, and under the direction, of the Holy Spirit. They did not have most of the things we think we need to "do church." Yet they changed their culture and were accused of turning the world upside down (Acts 17:6 KJV).

Nearly two thousand years later, Jesus' church has drifted a long way from where it began. I believe the church lost the ability to be and make disciples centuries ago when Constantine turned a multiplying movement of disciples into a religion. Thankfully, God is currently restoring the original design of the body of Christ all over the world!

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Chapter 4: Fishing with a Net

Jesus trained His disciples to fish for souls **with a net**. His miracle in Luke 5:1-11 is the backdrop for His declaration that He will make His followers into fishers of men. Let's take a look.

One day as Jesus was preaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, great crowds pressed in on him to listen to the word of God. He noticed two empty boats at the water's edge, for the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked Simon, its owner, to push it out into the water. So he sat in the boat and taught the crowds from there.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Now go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish."

"Master," Simon replied, "we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, I'll let the nets down again." And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear! A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking.

When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, "Oh, Lord, please leave me—I'm such a sinful man." For he was awestruck by the number of fish they had caught, as were the others with him. His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also amazed.

Jesus replied to Simon, "Don't be afraid! From now on you'll be fishing for people!" And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.

In this encounter, Jesus is teaching on the shore, but then He steps into Simon Peter's boat and asks him to push out a little from shore so He can teach more people. When He finishes teaching, He tells Peter to put the boat into deep water and let down the nets for a catch. Peter begins to put up a little resistance. He gives an excuse as to why he shouldn't let down the net. He says that he's "worked hard all night and caught nothing." By this time, it is the middle of the day when the fish are usually down in deep water to escape the sun. Notice the reason Peter lets down the net. It's not because he wants to, and it's not because he thinks it's a good idea, or because he thinks he's going to catch any fish. He does it because his master and rabbi told him to.

Obedience is one primary characteristic of discipleship (more on this later); what followed was an event that these seasoned fishermen would never forget! They caught so many fish that their net began to break, and they had to call for help from a second boat. They caught so many fish that both vessels were in danger of sinking!

Of course, once Peter realized that God was in his boat, he said, "Go away from me, Lord, I'm a sinful man." Jesus ignores Peter's request to go away from Him and instead says, "Don't be afraid. From now on, you'll catch people." Then it says they left everything (the most incredible catch of their lives) and followed Him.

Hang on a minute. If you are a professional fisherman, how do you get money to purchase clothes or food, or shelter? You sell fish, right? So if you were Peter, Andrew, James, and John, you would be hauling in all those fish thinking, "Jackpot! I just won the lottery!" Notice that Jesus doesn't give them that opportunity.

He literally makes them choose between the fish and himself. Since it says, "They left everything and **followed** Jesus," we know He must have walked away. But if they didn't get to clean and sell the fish, why did Jesus perform this miracle? Was He showing off? Just showing, "I'm God, and I can put fish in your net." Maybe...or is it more likely that this was a prophetic picture? Perhaps Jesus was creating a tremendous, powerful, unforgettable, miraculous event as the backdrop for the statement "... from now on, you'll catch men." It's like He's saying, "With me in your boat, we will catch people like we just caught those fish." Right? Do you see it? I imagine Him saying, "Now that you've seen me FILL YOUR NET with fish, follow Me NOW, **and I will fill your nets with people!**"

Fishing with a Net vs Fishing with a Hook

Take a minute and consider the difference between fishing with a hook and fishing with a net. If you've ever fished, did you use a hook, or a net, or have you done both? When you fish with a hook, what do you know about that fish? You know it was hungry, right? What did you put on the hook? You put bait on the hook. The bait is potential food for

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the fish you're trying to catch. So you know that the fish had to be hungry for you to catch it with a hook.. and when you fish with a hook, how many fish do you catch at a time? Only one!

But what about when you fish with a net? How many fish do you catch at a time? Usually, it's more than one. And when you fish with a net, do you know if the fish are hungry? You don't know, do you? Because the fish just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time (or the right place at the right time depending on your perspective).

If it is true that Jesus taught them to fish with a net and catch people in groups, then in the Bible, we should expect to see people primarily entering the Kingdom in groups and not just one at a time.

I know that many of you you have been taught and even practiced it, but as we dig a bit deeper, we will see that Jesus goes after social circles and may never go after a single individual. He always, and I mean ALWAYS, in every single example I can find, focused on reaching the person's social circle (friends and family) as well as the person themselves.

Are You Truly Following Jesus?

Jesus said, "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men." Can you say that? Can your church say that? If people follow you or your religious organization will they become fishers of men or will they become something else? Something less than Jesus intends for them to become? So, if a person claims to follow Jesus but doesn't fish for people, are they really following Jesus?

Be honest with yourself right now. Suppose a person begins following you or your organization, or starts going to your church or Bible study. Will they become a fisher of men? Or are they more likely to become a comfortable, complacent, passive spectator Christian who does little to nothing to advance the Kingdom of Jesus in this world?

If your answer is not that they will become fishers of men, then I regret to inform you that you and/or your religious system are NOT truly leading people to follow Jesus, even if you say you are!

Personal Evangelism?

I was teaching this principle of fishing for souls with a net in India, when a man in the front row jumped to his feet and said, "Wait just a minute! I have taught personal evangelism classes." I said, "Great, what passages did you use? He told me he had used the story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10) and the story of the woman at the well (John 4) as his proof texts for teaching personal evangelism. I said, "Thank you, sir. Those are both excellent examples." Then I directed the whole group to look at the end of both encounters.

In both of those examples, not only was the one person saved, but their family or town (social network) also got saved. In the case of Zacchaeus, a household was saved (Luke 19:9). And in the case of the woman at the well, an entire town was saved (John 4:39-42). This is what Jesus taught and trained his followers to do. He taught them and still teaches us to reach households and towns. He never trained his followers to reach individuals alone. I'm not trying to offend those of you who have practiced personal evangelism. I'm not trying to minimize the value of a single soul. What I want you to see is that Jesus loves individuals AND all the people that they know and love. I want you to see that there was a godly strategy at work here to save the souls of the person AND all the people they care about. Mathematically speaking winning one soul here and there is much less productive than going two-by-two and winning them in groups of five, 10, or 20 at a time.

"Fish" that Weren't Hungry (Looking for God)

A few years ago, I received a message from one of our trainees working as a disciple-maker in Uganda. He said that he and his team felt led to do outreach in a particular Muslim village. I said, "That's great! What's your plan?" He said, "We plan to go and knock on all the doors in the neighborhood and share the gospel with those willing to listen." I said, "Ok, but (remember our firewall question) where do you see that in the practices of the New Testament church? Where do you see anyone going and knocking on all the doors in a neighborhood in the New Testament?" He got

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back to me the next day and said, “Nowhere, sir,” meaning that he could find no place in the New Testament where people do “door-to-door evangelism.”

So I asked him, “What do you think you are supposed to do? Maybe you should read Luke 10:1-11 (Jesus sending the 72) and pray before you make your decision.” After reading the passage and praying with his team, he messaged me and said, “We know the Lord wants us to go to that village. But instead of knocking on all the doors, we are simply going to pray and walk up and down the streets and look for people of peace.” People of peace are open to spiritual things and looking for God. So that is what they did.

This young disciple-maker’s name is Isaiah, and when Isaiah was in the marketplace looking for a person of peace, he met a Muslim man named Habib. Habib was dying of AIDS. Habib had lost two of his three wives to AIDS and planned to commit suicide in three days. Habib listened as Isaiah shared about the eternal life available through surrendering his life to Jesus and Jesus’ power to heal. So Habib said to Isaiah, “If your Jesus is real and as powerful as you say, then he should be able to heal me of AIDS.” Then Habib made an astonishing statement. He said, “If your Jesus heals me of AIDS, then I will follow him, both me and my household.”

Habib still had one living wife, and he had fifteen children. Are you seeing the significance of this? Sixteen souls who aren’t there, don’t have AIDS, and aren’t considering suicide are being offered to Jesus IF Jesus heals him. Do you see the net yet?

So Isaiah put his hand on Habib’s shoulder, and he said, “AIDS be gone in the almighty name of Jesus!” The next day Habib went to the local clinic. They tested his blood, and they could find no evidence of AIDS. Habib wasn’t satisfied, so he went to the local hospital and had his blood drawn again. They gave him the same answer. They said, “Habib, we don’t know what happened, but we can’t find any evidence of AIDS in your blood anymore.” Habib, being a very tenacious man, was still unsatisfied, so he traveled to the best hospital in Kampala, Uganda, and had his blood drawn there. You guessed it, they said, “Habib, we can find no evidence of AIDS in your blood!” Jesus had healed him!

Habib was so excited that he went door-to-door through the same neighborhood where the disciple makers had originally planned to go. And he knocked on all the doors and told every person in that community, “Jesus healed me of AIDS!” And, true to his word, all of his fifteen children and his one remaining wife surrendered their lives to the lordship of Jesus Christ because of this miracle.

By the time I heard this story, more than 100 Muslims had come to Christ as a result of this miracle and the testimony of Habib! You see, Jesus is still powerful, and Jesus still heals, and Jesus still fishes with a net! Notice that none of these 100 Muslims were “hungry” or actively looking for Jesus (as far as we know), but after reaching the person of peace, the net of the Kingdom of God fell on them, and they were caught up in it anyway!

Jesus also promised that His followers would experience persecution in this life (Mark 10:30), and Habib was not immune. Even though there was a great victory for Jesus, most of Habib’s community rejected him and the Jesus he was proclaiming. He lost his home, possessions, and job due to his decision to follow the Jesus who healed him!

This didn’t deter him. He said, “If Jesus can heal me of AIDS, then Jesus can find me a new home, possessions, and job.” And that is exactly what Jesus did. But he also gave Habib a ministry. Today, Habib has shade cloth stretched over his backyard and he uses this space to train people to be disciples who obey Jesus and multiply by making more disciples who obey Jesus. Praise the Lord!

I tell you this story because it is an excellent example of how Jesus still fishes with a net today. Oftentimes many who are not “hungry” end up getting caught in Jesus’ net simply because they were associated with the person of peace.

Some, who have given me some pushback on the idea that Jesus always fished with a net, have suggested that the calling of Peter and Matthew and the other disciples were “individual” callings or examples of personal evangelism, but that is not what I see. I see Jesus utilizing His relationship with these men to reach their social circle.

Consider Matthew

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Look at Matthew 9:10.

10 While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples.

Immediately following the call of Matthew, we see Jesus having dinner in Matthew's house, where many of Matthew's friends and co-workers were gathered to hear Jesus. We don't know if any of them became followers of Jesus. Still, they certainly had the opportunity to meet the Messiah and hear the gospel from Jesus' own lips. Therefore, they would have at least understood Matthew's choice to follow Jesus.

Remember, Jesus always fishes with a net. Which means He goes after social circles. He uses an individual to access and save as many as possible from that person's friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers.

Matthew was also known as "Levi" which might imply that he was a Levite. And if he was a Levite then he was supposed to be serving at the temple and not serving the despised, occupying, gentile Romans. Do you think Matthew was welcome in his own home? I highly doubt it. He was probably considered a traitor and a turncoat. So in attending a banquet at Matthew's house and rubbing elbows with the other tax collectors and sinners, Jesus was actively interacting with the social circle of Matthew because Jesus fished with a net. And if I know Jesus, I'm confident He offered eternal life and citizenship in His eternal Kingdom to all the people at Matthew's banquet.

Did Jesus Only Win Peter?

And what about Peter? Wasn't Peter's brother Andrew also an apostle? In fact, it was actually Andrew who first introduced Peter to Jesus. (John 1:41) Didn't Jesus spend the night at Peter's house? While He was there, Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law. So, if Peter's mother-in-law lived with Peter, it's possible that Peter's father-in-law was living there as well as Peter's wife and children (if he had any). So again, we see Jesus capitalizing on one person to likely win others within the social circle of that individual. In this case, it is Peter.

Lastly, let's consider the brothers James and John. We know their father, Zebedee, met Jesus at least once. But notice an interesting detail found in Matthew 27:55-56:

55 Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. 56 Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

We see that one of the women who had followed Jesus around and cared for His needs was "the mother of Zebedee's sons."

In Matthew 20:21, she had even asked Jesus to let her sons have the places of prominence at His right and left in His Kingdom! That request makes more sense now that we see she was also one of His financial supporters.

So, in every one of these cases, Zacchaeus, the woman at the well, as well as Peter, Matthew, Andrew, James, and John, we see Jesus interacting not only with the individual but also with the people who are closest to them or their social circle of most intimate relationships. In this way, He gives us an example of fishing with a net and still sends us to do the same thing today. He literally said, "As the father sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21). If the Father sent Him to target social circles and to fish with a net, do you think that still applies to you and me today? You bet it does.

Samuel's Story

Here is an example of how this can look in real life. The first time I went to Africa, I had a translator named Samuel. At the time, Samuel wasn't even part of the group that had invited me. He was invited because he spoke English well. Samuel worked as a seminary professor and had worked for 35 years as a pastor of a local congregation. In all that time, he had only seen the congregation grow to about 50 and it hadn't grown for years. Samuel was preaching the truth, and his congregation invited people to attend the meetings, but they weren't winning any souls. No new people were coming. Samuel was discouraged! He tells people that he felt like Peter, who had "worked hard all night and caught nothing."

That was Samuel's state of discouragement when he first learned about first-century biblical discipleship.

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For three days, Samuel stood next to me and translated our entire training to the 50 or 60 pastors, elders, and bishops in attendance.

But after the training concluded, I returned to the United States and we lost track of each other. Ten months later, I found myself back in Africa. I was in Kampala, Uganda, about eight hours from Samuel's home, but Samuel joined our team.

He was so excited! He felt like he had a new lease on life. He said, "Brother, let me tell you what has happened." And he shared what had transpired in his life and ministry since I had last seen him. He said, "Brother, I realized that I had not been doing Jesus' work Jesus' way, and that's why I had not been seeing Jesus' results." He went on to say, "I shared your training and the Scriptures with my elders and told them we need to start doing Jesus' work Jesus' way if we want to see Jesus' results."

The elders agreed with what Samuel showed them. So Samuel and the elders went before the congregation, and they repented. They asked the congregation, "Please, forgive us. We've been trying to do Jesus' work man's way and tradition's way, and we've been getting dismal results. But now we've learned how to do Jesus' work Jesus' way." (I wonder how many church leaders need to do the same thing today and what the results would be.)

Samuel and the elders trained the entire congregation to fish for people with a net while leaving them right where they found them. By doing this, they started New Testament churches wherever and whenever they found people who were looking for God and willing to gather together with their friends and family.

Then Samuel made this mind-blowing statement: "Brother, we have multiplied from 50 Christian church members in one location to 2500 obedient multiplying disciples in more than 100 locations all over northwest Kenya!" Praise the Lord! It all happened in just ten short months. So, instead of just overseeing one small stagnant congregation in one location, Samuel now is part of a team that oversees a vibrant growing movement of disciples making disciples in multiple nations in East Africa.

The Lord sparked a transition in Samuel's life and ministry. He went from being an overworked, burned-out pastor of 50 people to overseeing a living, vibrant, growing movement of over 100 New Testament churches in less than a year.

Imagine my excitement at learning this is what the Lord was doing in Samuel's life and ministry while I was away. I was overjoyed! I had no idea that anything was happening with Samuel. I tell you this story because that's what can happen when the followers of Christ start to fish with a net and do Jesus' work Jesus' way.

Jesus can do the same through your obedient, surrendered life if you let Him. Repent to those you lead and start **DOING** Jesus' work Jesus' way and see what happens.

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Chapter 5:

Will the Traditional Church Finish the Great Commission?

Here is the truth: If the church keeps doing things the way it is doing them now, we will NEVER finish the Great Commission! The population base is growing faster than the numbers of followers of Christ are growing. It is also because the traditional, building-based church system doesn't make genuine disciples. Instead, it tends to make passive spectators. And most Christian church members contribute almost nothing to reaching the lost world and finishing the Great Commission.

Suppose every time a new church gets fifteen or twenty people saved, they pause to build, renovate, or even rent a meeting space (that sits empty most of the week). In that case, they will continue to lose ground in reaching the world for Christ. Population growth will continue to outpace the growth of the church!

When a church plant pauses to establish a facility, a subtle but deadly shift occurs in the group's mindset. The group tends to transition from being outward-focused with a "go" mentality to inward-focused with a "come" mentality. The focus tends to become about building "our facility" instead of expanding Jesus' Kingdom.

On the other hand, when Jesus' church learns to be an army of multiplying, obedient disciples of Jesus, fishing with a net, then we can remain outward-focused and always keep a "go" mentality. If we maintain that outward focus, we will see the Great Commission finished and the return of Jesus in our lifetimes!

The truth is that multiplying disciples according to the New Testament model is the only way to accomplish the work that Jesus COMMANDED us to do, which is to make DISCIPLES of ALL nations! We are not, and never were, supposed to create and become passive spectator Christians. To settle for that level is to stop short of what Jesus requires! And quite frankly, it is sin and disobedience on behalf of the church and church leadership! Jesus wants more for us. Will you let Him have His way in your life?

On the Streets of Kampala

I know a woman who raised herself on the streets of Kampala, Uganda, after being abandoned there by her grandmother at the age of five. Today she is a prolific disciple-maker. At one point in 2016, the Lord used her to start 25 New Testament churches in just a few months. One of these groups outgrew the home they were meeting in. She messaged me and said, "Brother, too many people are coming to this gathering. We don't fit in the house anymore. What should we do?"

I thought she was asking me for money to build a building. But I prayed and felt like the Lord told me to suggest they pray about it. So I told her, "Ask the Lord what you should do and let me know what He says." She excitedly messaged me a few days later and said, "We found a large shade tree that we can all fit under, so we've decided to meet there." Doesn't that sound nice? Church under a tree? And it didn't cost Jesus' Kingdom a dime.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that slowing down or stopping this rapid and spontaneous expansion of the church to build religious buildings for all the new disciples to meet in would kill the movement.

Financial Impossibility

From a financial standpoint, it is a mathematical impossibility to raise money and build buildings at a pace that would keep up with the growth of these worldwide movements. David Hunt (the missionary from Ethiopia) went so far as to say, "Buildings kill movements." That is because of the shift in focus. In a DMM, the focus is always outward, on what family, household, or group can be led to Jesus next. Then, that group becomes a New Testament fellowship that will also multiply. And when they cease to have an outward focus, they cease to be a movement.

In building our religious buildings, the focus is inward. What color carpet? What kind of chairs? How big of a stage? What type of coffee will be served? The list goes on and on. Our focus shifts to lights, windows, doors, drum sets, guitars, keyboards, dress codes, paint colors, curtains, bathrooms, child care, etc... And while we like to say that these decisions are made for the lost world, if we are honest we must admit that these decisions are primarily about

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us. The truth is that most of the lost world will not be entering our sanctuaries anyway. If they did, our buildings would immediately be too small. No, most of these decisions are made for our comfort and convenience, not for the lost world around us that is dying and going to hell without Christ.

10 Million Disciples?

Once, when I conducted this training in Nigeria, the leaders got very excited. They announced they would disciple 10 million people in the next ten years. Now, that's a lofty goal, but I was excited to see what God would do. They did the math, and they saw that it was possible if groups of disciples would start more groups of disciples and never stop. Following the training, I returned to the US. Several months later, they were still determined to disciple 10 million people, but somehow decided they needed to build religious buildings for the 10 million new disciples to meet in.

The building where we held the initial training seated about 200 people. It was a basic building made of cement block walls and a suspended ceiling. I asked how much it cost to build that building. They gave me a number. Then, I divided 10 million by 200 and arrived at 50,000. They would need to build 50,000 similar structures for these 10 million disciples to gather once or twice weekly. As we joked about the cost of a project like that, we wondered if there was enough money in Nigeria to build all those buildings for all those disciples. This, of course, made it a financial impossibility and an unattainable goal. The real cost would be in the billions of dollars and would shift the work from a disciple-making movement to a fundraising project for a building program.

To disciple nations, Jesus never commanded us to build special religious buildings for the disciples to meet in. The group I just mentioned took an achievable goal and made it unachievable by deciding they needed to build religious buildings for all the disciples they hoped to make.

Think about this:

Everyone on Earth already has buildings they meet in. We'll see much greater success if we utilize existing buildings (and shade trees) rather than constructing new buildings for all the new followers of Jesus Christ.

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Chapter 6:

Don't Put New Wine into Old Wineskins!

In three of the four Gospels, Jesus tells us NOT to put new wine in old wineskins (Matthew 9:17, Mark 2:22, and Luke 5:37). Why did He give this teaching?

Let's look at the passage from Mark 2:22

And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins."

Do you think He wanted to make sure all of His followers knew how to turn grape juice into an alcoholic beverage? Of course not. Did He want to ensure they always had wine on hand so they could have communion anytime? Probably not. Is Jesus really talking about wine, or is it possible that He is talking about something else?

Could Jesus be talking about our spiritual operating systems? Could He be speaking about the way we function as His followers?

In the days of Jesus, people made wine by adding yeast to the sweet grape juice and then sealing it in the fresh skin of an animal. As the yeast converts the sugars in the grape juice into alcohol, a gas (carbon dioxide) is released. That gas creates tremendous pressure, so the container must be able to stretch.

It is that very same expansion and pressure that will burst OLD wineskins! This is because an animal skin can only be stretched ONCE! Suppose you put that same combination of ingredients (grape juice and yeast) into an old wineskin that has already been stretched. In that case, the skin will burst (rupture, pop, tear), and, according to Jesus Himself, BOTH the wine AND the wineskin will be ruined!

He also goes on to say, "The person who has tasted the old wine doesn't want the new wine because he says, 'the old is better.'"

This is similar to how many people feel about the old traditional way of doing church. They believe the traditional way is better, so they won't even consider a new (actually the original) way of doing things. But Jesus brought a NEW WINE way of doing things! And it IS the purpose of this book to help you learn how to operate in the NEW WINE ways of Jesus! If you are committed to traditional practices and old paradigms, no matter how unbiblical or unproductive they may be, this is NOT the book for you.

It is essential to recognize that the "NEW WAY" Jesus is bringing back all over the world today is actually the ORIGINAL WAY the New Testament church operated 2000 years ago when it started.

It is also essential to recognize that the building-based, pastor-centered, Sunday morning church system is actually an invention of man that isn't found in the New Testament at all.

When Jesus taught about the wineskins, Jerusalem had hundreds of synagogues. This doesn't even include the hundreds of synagogues in all the other towns of Israel at that time.

The Synagogue And The Building-Based Church

A synagogue was (and still is) a religious building, much like our church buildings. It had a leader (Synagogue Ruler), much like the pastor today. They held weekly services on Saturdays, while the Christian church usually meets on Sundays. A synagogue service consisted of prayers, scripture readings, a message (sermon), an offering, some announcements, chanting (like our singing), and a benediction. Does this sound familiar? Our modern-day building-based church system strongly resembles the synagogue system of Jesus' day. (Ernest De Witt Burton. "The Ancient Synagogue Service." *The Biblical World*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1896, pp. 143–148. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3140264)

Jesus' twelve apostles were Jewish men raised in the old wineskin of the Jewish synagogue system. No wonder it took Jesus three years to reshape these men into the **New Wine** of the rapidly expanding movement of disciples of

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Christ! He equipped them to operate in the **New Wineskin** of the world and the outward expansion continued throughout their lives!

Once, I was in northern Uganda, training a rural congregation in biblical discipleship. We were holding the training in a small mud-walled church building with a grass roof, and the place was packed (it held about 70 people).

I asked them, "If each of you brought just one person to this meeting tomorrow, what would happen?" They replied, "We wouldn't fit." EXACTLY! And that is because the current old, rigid wineskin of building-based church systems cannot handle the pressure of the rapid expansion of the New Wine operating system of Jesus. It simply cannot stretch to accommodate any real growth.

In contrast to that, what would happen if each person reading this book went out and identified an entire household that contains someone looking for God? What if that person taught the people in that household to BE THE CHURCH right where they are? If everyone who reads this book does that, we will have added hundreds or thousands of souls to the Kingdom of God without 'breaking' a thing. This is because the world is big enough to handle expansion but buildings aren't.

We must utilize a New Wine operating system to facilitate rapid Kingdom growth that outpaces population growth. We must also use a New Wineskin vessel that can accommodate this pressure of expansion. So, as part of that Northern Ugandan training, we sent them all outside in about a dozen small groups to practice being the church under a tree.

Don't miss this: The little church building was empty while they practiced being the church "anywhere."

Remember, the world can handle the expansion of the New Wine of the way of Jesus; our religious buildings cannot!

When a church operates in the New Wine way, there are no limits imposed by rigid structures on the amount of growth that a network of disciples can experience or the size it can grow to.

You can apply a test to determine if you are operating in a new or old wine model. Ask yourself, "If our numbers doubled tomorrow and then doubled again next week, could we handle that?" If your answer is "no," you are operating in an old wineskin model. This should indicate that you need to begin shifting to Jesus' New Wine model ASAP.

500% Growth

Several years ago, I was conducting this training in Valencia, Venezuela. There were about 50 or 60 people in that training. At one point during the training, I asked them to raise their hand if they had any people living in their homes who were not interested in attending the Sunday morning church meetings. To my surprise, every single hand in the room went up. Most of them had four to five people in their homes who had no interest in "going to church."

So I asked them, "How many of those people in your homes would be willing to join you for a Bible study in your living room, especially if you prepared food and drink for them?" Again, every hand went up. Almost all of them believed their family members would happily study the Bible in their homes over food and drink and in the presence of friends and family. So we taught them the Discovery Bible Study (DBS) process, and they started conducting those Bible studies in their homes.

The impact of that little group of 50 or 60 people multiplied to more than 300 people in just one week! This is because they were given permission, equipped, and encouraged to "be the church" with their friends, neighbors, and families right in their own homes!

Do you see the power of this? If they had tried to drag all those people to church, the building would have immediately been too small, and they would have burst that old wineskin.

Brothers and sisters, this isn't some new gimmick of church growth. This is how Jesus trained, operated, equipped, and commissioned His followers to function! It is the original operating system of the New Testament church. It is the way we should still be operating today. I'm convinced that if the Church doesn't return to the powerful, simple, original way of Jesus, we have no hope of finishing the Great Commission...ever!

What Does Jesus Want?

Is it possible Jesus would prefer that we function in His New Wine spiritual operating system that is able to DISCIPLE ALL the NATIONS of the world? Could it be that the rigid, building-based, old wineskin church system can not contain the rapid spontaneous expansion that the New Wineskin church produces? In His teaching about the wineskins, could He be saying that if we try to squeeze HIS New Wine into an old church model, we will restrict the growth, stifle the movement, and RUIN THEM BOTH?

The very thing that destroys the old wineskin is the rapid, powerful, expansive pressure of the new wine. The thing that ruins the new wine is the restrictive rigidity of the old wineskin. New wine destroys old wineskins, and old wineskins destroy new wines! So don't mix them...ever.

While in context the parable is combating legalistic views of fasting, I believe that the New Wine Jesus was referring to IS His rapidly multiplying obedient disciples that are discipling the nations (His Kingdom expansion), and the New Wineskin is Planet Earth!

Anytime two or more gather in His name, you can have New Wine, and **Anywhere** two or more gather in His name can be the New Wineskin.

Logistically, the natural gathering places that already exist in the world are the only gathering spaces that, when combined, can contain the rapidly increasing numbers of Jesus' disciples around the world today. In reality, people can be the church of Jesus in their homes, businesses, restaurants or coffee shops, religious buildings, caves, mountain tops, or even under trees.

First African Training

I've already mentioned that our first training in Africa consisted of about 50-60 pastors, elders, and bishops. Those leaders already had some exposure to DMM. Still, they needed help to put it into practice and see any real multiplication. These men and women fasted and prayed before we did this training. Once they saw the training program of Jesus and understood that making disciples is a command and not just a suggestion, they launched a Disciple-Making Movement! That movement has brought **hundreds of thousands of souls** into the Kingdom of God in less than ten years! This network continues to multiply and is now operating in more than eight nations. These leaders constantly receive invitations to go and train other leaders all over the world. Healings are commonplace, and evil spirits are being cast out almost daily! It looks like the book of Acts is still being written today.

Taking a Risk

Learning to function in this new operating system of Jesus involves taking risks and stepping out in faith. One of these African groups had already been meeting in a home before they went through this training. Still, they only had about twenty people attending their weekly gathering. They struggled to grow beyond that number. They had yet to grasp how to do Jesus' work Jesus' way. Even though they were meeting in a home, they still thought they were supposed to invite people to their meeting. They had yet to learn the firewall question, "Where do you see that in the practices of Jesus or the New Testament church?" Where do you see anyone inviting anyone to their Sunday morning worship service in the New Testament? It's simply not there.

So, one Sunday morning, this group conducted an experiment. They told the whole group of twenty, "Next week, don't come to church." Can you imagine your pastor or priest saying that to you? They told them, "Instead of coming to church, go to the marketplace or wherever people are gathered, and talk to them about God. And then come back the following week and share how it went." So, two weeks later, when they returned, twenty new people followed them! The fellowship doubled (from twenty to forty) in just two weeks simply by taking a risk and doing something outward-focused. And, rather than build a building, they found another home to meet in.

This is Sometimes a Controversial Topic

Let's consider some Scriptures:

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Proverbs 14:6 says, "...knowledge comes easily to the discerning."

Hosea 4:6 says, "...my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children."

And 2 Peter 3:9 says, "...he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

Therefore, please be discerning as you consume this information.

In the Hosea passage, it is the priests (spiritual leaders) who are the ones who were withholding specific knowledge that God's people needed so they wouldn't be destroyed and perish.

In essence, God is saying, "Since you refuse to give My people the knowledge they need to avoid being destroyed (perishing), then I am going to remove you from your position as a spiritual leader and I'm going to ignore your children!"

And Peter clearly stated that God desires every single person to be saved (that is, not perish) by coming to repentance; therefore, there is specific knowledge that each person must obtain and act on, in order to be saved and live in a right relationship with God! God says that if the spiritual leaders withhold that knowledge from God's people, **THEY ARE REJECTED!** And it's not me who's rejecting them. It's **ALMIGHTY GOD!**

If you are one of those spiritual leaders withholding the knowledge people need to mature and grow and multiply and have spiritual children, I encourage you to repent and trust God to replace every disciple you send out with many more for you to train and send.

Let's attempt to look at this from God's perspective for a moment.

Imagine you were a commander of an army with the task of taking a massive landmass for your king. Under your charge were 20 generals who were ordered to train and send the troops to go and take that territory for your king.

Now imagine that 5 of the generals trained, equipped, and sent the soldiers to do the bidding of the king and the other 15 generals just kept the soldiers in perpetual training but never actually sent them to take any territory for the king. As the commander of that army, which generals would you send new recruits to? The ones that actually train and send the soldiers to battle or the ones who keep the soldiers in a perpetual training program with little or no territory ever won for the king? Of course you'd send the recruits to the generals who actually trained **and sent** them to do the work they were recruited for in the first place.

Ephesians 4:11-14 clearly states that the purpose of the leadership gifts is that the saints be equipped **FOR WORKS OF SERVICE** and that they attain **THE FULLNESS OF THE STATURE OF CHRIST** (that is, to become just like Jesus) and that they will "no longer be infants."

Let's look at it together. Ephesians 4:11-14 (NIV)

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 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. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

If you just read the underlined portions, you'll see that pastors (along with the other leadership gifts) were given by Jesus to equip and mature people so that they become like Jesus and do **NOT** remain infants!

In far too many religious organizations today, people can (and often do) remain infants for decades. Rarely is there even a hope or plan for them to mature and attain the fullness of the stature of Christ. To neglect equipping the saints for ministry goes against the very reason the leadership gifts were given to the church.

Do you believe me?

Please be like a Berean as you read these things. Acts 17:11 says that the Bereans studied the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul said was true. In the same way, I encourage you to explore the Scriptures to see if what you are reading in this book is true. Don't take my word for it. Do your own research.

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I'm not trying to be right! I just want you and every follower of Jesus to reach your full potential in Christ and achieve maximum impact on eternity by operating according to the pattern, and in the power, of the New Testament church.

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Chapter 7:

Should Jesus and His Followers Have the Same Goal?

Of course they should. Can you imagine the confusion that would result if they didn't? That would be like a coach and his team having differing game plans. Jesus and His followers must have the same goal if we hope to achieve it. But what is that goal?

If your parents were going to leave you home alone for six months when you were sixteen years old, would they just leave and hope you survive, or would they give you some clear instructions before they left? If they were good parents, they would give you some final instructions, and then they would leave. And those last instructions would apply for the entire time they were gone. Right?

That is the exact situation the church is in today. Jesus left us here while He went to be with His Father for a while. But He promised to return. Before He left, Jesus gave us some final instructions (or commands) to govern our conduct for the time He was gone. And, since He is still gone, we should still be living and operating according to Jesus' final instructions. Right? But how many of us are really doing that?

Let's take a close look at the final commands of Christ to get a clear understanding of what we are supposed to be doing **while** we await His return.

The first and most well-known final command is found in Matthew 28:18-20. It says:

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

When you look at what we call the "Great Commission", you see four things that Jesus is telling His followers to do. The first one is "**GO.**" A more accurate translation would be "as you go." This implies that as we go through life and wherever we go, we should always be doing the other things Jesus tells us to do in this passage.

The next thing He tells us to do is to "**Make Disciples,**" followed by a command to "**baptize them.**" Lastly, we see a command to "teach them to obey everything I (Jesus) commanded you."

In the original Greek, Jesus is only giving ONE command. The other three directives are what we call a participle—they are the explanations of "HOW TO" accomplish the primary command. And the primary command is to "**MAKE DISCIPLES.**"

If you tell your child to clean the kitchen by washing the dishes, mopping the floor and wiping off the countertops, the actual command is "clean the kitchen." The other three commands of washing the dishes, mopping the floor, and wiping down the countertops are the participles that explain HOW to clean the kitchen.

If you want to make anything, you need both a plan to follow and the ingredients or materials required. Think about that for a moment. If someone dropped off all the materials for your house in a pile but didn't provide you with a plan on *how* to make your house, you would not be able to make your house, would you?

On the other hand, if someone gave you the plans to build your house but you didn't

have any materials, you would also be doomed to failure because you can't make anything with the plan alone. Therefore, to make anything (including disciples), it is necessary to have both the plan and the materials. In the Great Commission, we discover the plan of HOW TO make disciples. We will discover the "materials" of a disciple later.

According to Matthew, the Great Commission gives us three steps to make disciples. The first is "**Go.**" The second is "**baptize them.**" And the third is to "**teach them to obey ALL of Jesus' commands.**"

In my mind, the presence of the word THEM begs the question, "Who do we baptize, and who do we teach?"

Let's look at the Great Commission, according to Mark, to find our answer.

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Mark 16:15-16 says:

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

Notice that Mark includes a detail that Matthew left out. Like Matthew, Mark includes "GO," but unlike Matthew, Mark says to "**PREACH THE GOSPEL!**" Then Mark tells us to baptize those who believe. Looking back into Matthew, we see Jesus orders us to teach those "who believe and are baptized" to obey everything He commanded.

Four Steps to Making Disciples

Therefore, just from the two Great Commissions recorded in Matthew and Mark, we can see:

FOUR STEPS TO MAKING DISCIPLES:

GO

PREACH THE GOSPEL

BAPTIZE THOSE WHO BELIEVE

TEACH THEM TO OBEY EVERYTHING JESUS COMMANDED!

Shedding More Light on the Great Commission

Let's look at a few other verses to give us an even better understanding of the Great Commission.

In Luke 24:47, Jesus says,

"and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

So we must include repentance in our gospel preaching because there is NO forgiveness of sins without it! And without forgiveness of sins, there is no salvation!

Then in John 20:21, we see these words of Jesus:

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

Therefore we must always recognize that we are being sent in the Spirit in which Jesus was sent. The Father sent Jesus as a sacrifice for the souls of the world. He sends us the same way, to lay down our lives for the souls of others. Is that the Spirit you and I operate in? It should be.

And finally, to gain a clear picture of the entire Great Commission, we must include Acts 1:8.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the Earth."

In this passage we see that to truly be His witnesses, we must operate in the power, and under the direction of, the Holy Spirit and He will direct us to be witnesses (or examples) of Jesus from wherever we are to wherever He sends us. For some of us, it will literally be to the ends of the Earth.

The Complete Great Commission!

If we combine all of these passages, how would the final command of Christ read? It would probably sound something like this:

"I have been given all the authority in the universe, therefore go in the power of the Holy Spirit to the whole Earth and represent Me by preaching the gospel of repentance for the forgiveness of sins to all people everywhere. Baptize those who repent and believe, and teach them to obey all of My commands. In this way, you will make true disciples of everyone on Earth. And remember, I'm with you to the end of the age."

Now ask yourself honestly, "Am I willing to live as a Great Commission disciple of Jesus for the rest of my days?"

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Pay close attention to what the Great Commission doesn't say; it doesn't say to go build religious buildings. It doesn't say to go and make passive, spectator Christian church members. It doesn't say to set apart (ordain) a special high class of professional Christians and place all the burdens and work of ministry on them. It doesn't say to make sure you gather in the same place on the same day for the same amount of time to listen to a religious speech each week. It doesn't say to "preach" to saved people...nope. In the modern, building-based, Constantinian system, we tend to do what we weren't told to do while not doing the things we were told to do. None of these things are found in the Great Commission or among the commands of Christ.

In the New Testament, preaching is primarily done to lost people. Teaching obedience to all the commands of Christ is done to the baptized believers. Sadly, very few who claim to follow Christ are teaching obedience today. I praise God for the ones that are. And every day, more and more people are waking up and embracing the original Great Commission methods and the power of the New Testament church.

How do you make a Soufflé?

This might seem like an odd analogy but bear with me for a minute.

If my wife sent me into the kitchen and told me to make a soufflé (a puffy egg dish pronounced 'soo-flay'), but she didn't tell me the ingredients or the process, and she didn't let me use Google, what are the chances that I'd come out of the kitchen with a soufflé? Pretty much zero, right?

I'd probably make a mess and come out with something other than what I was trying to make. That would happen because I don't know the process to follow OR the ingredients of a soufflé.

Well, that is what much of the church is doing with discipleship today. We use the word discipleship and say we are making disciples. In reality, most Christians and church leaders don't know what the word "disciple" meant to Jesus. Most are also unaware of the process of making disciples. Because of this, they end up making something other than, and less than, what Jesus told us to make.

Therefore, while the church engages in many activities that it calls discipleship, it often ends up making a mess rather than making genuine disciples, according to Jesus' first-century definition and understanding of the term.

Several times I have spoken to religious leaders who tell me that they "have (or do) discipleship" (whatever that means). Still, when I dig a little deeper, I inevitably discover that they are only trying to make better Christian church members, which is something Jesus never told us to do.

You might be thinking, "Isn't it point #4 from above, 'Teach them to obey everything Jesus commanded'"?

The sad reality is that (and I cover this later) to be a member of the vast majority of Christian churches, all that is required is attendance, giving money, and volunteering.

Actual, literal obedience to the commands of Jesus Christ is not a requirement.

Preach The Gospel

Take a minute and ask yourself, "Am I able to articulate the good news? Can I preach the gospel? Am I equipped to lead a person from their current state of lostness to a state of salvation and eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ?" If your answer is no, you will struggle to make disciples. But don't worry. It doesn't have to be intimidating or complicated, and your first presentation of the gospel doesn't have to rival a sermon by Billy Graham.

Jesus is a genius; He knows that we must take people from where they are and help them progress to where God wants them to be. He knows that it's best to start simple and expand from there. Remember, in 1 Corinthians 11:1, we are told to be imitators of Christ. So then, as you imitate Christ, your **first** presentation of the gospel could resemble Jesus' **first** presentation of the gospel.

Look at Mark 1:15. Here is one of the first times Jesus is proclaiming the good news, and He simply says,

"The time has come, the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news."

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That's sixteen words. Could you say that to someone? If you do, be prepared to answer some questions like: "What is the Kingdom of God?" and "What does it mean to repent?"

I once used the phrase, "Repent because the Kingdom of God is near" in an unreached village in India, and the whole household came to Christ! So don't feel you must prepare a two-hour speech to share the gospel.

I actually began with the phrase, "Peace be upon you" from Luke 10, and the person responded by asking, "What kind of a greeting is that?" I replied, "I was sent to you by a God with many names. One of His names is the Prince of Peace, and He wants me to give His peace to you." They said, "Thank you, I'll receive that."

Then I said, "He also requires me to tell you that you must repent because the Kingdom of God is near." They asked, "What does it mean to repent, and what is the Kingdom of God?" And I said, "Another one of His names is King of kings, and soon He will return to Earth to establish His rule and Kingdom over the entire Earth. When He does that, everyone who is already a citizen of His Kingdom will receive immortal, eternal, imperishable bodies and will rule and reign with Him for 1000 years. But those who have not repented of their sin and have not received Him as the King of their lives will perish in eternal fire because He is not their king, so they can't be part of His Kingdom." They said, "We'd like to receive Him as our King."

So I explained the whole gospel, that all people are born sinful, which separates them from God. But if they turn from sin and receive Jesus as their Lord, Savior, and King, He will wash away their sins. This will allow them to participate in His Kingdom when He returns and enter the paradise of God when they die. At that moment, the entire household repented of their sin and prayed to receive Christ.

On that trip, we used that same basic format three different times, and two times it led to people coming to Christ! In one case, it was a whole family, and in another case, it was an entire small village. The third time we were rejected, but Jesus promised that would happen as well.

In your presentation of the Gospel, you can also use passages like John 1:12 that says if we receive Him (as Lord and Savior), we become children of God. Or use John 14:6, where Jesus says He is the ONLY way to get to God, and no one will get to the Father except through Him.

Then there are verses in Romans like 3:23 and 6:23, which state that everyone has a sin condition and therefore cannot receive eternal life on their own. These passages state that we all deserve eternal death in Hell because of our sin condition. Still, God offers us eternal life through Jesus if we only receive the free gift of eternal life He offers.

I encourage you to start by writing down the "good news of salvation" in a way that seems natural to you. Write down the gospel in your own words as you would share it with a friend. Then practice several times in front of a mirror. After that, ask someone who follows Christ to let you practice on them. Then ask someone who doesn't follow Christ if you can practice on them. Just be honest and tell them that as a disciple of Jesus Christ you are supposed to be able to share the gospel. Tell them that the God you serve requires you to be able to share this with people. Say, "Can I please practice with you?" Then ask for their questions and honest feedback. Use Google and YouTube if you need some assistance. Just search "how to share the gospel," and you'll get lots of ideas and information. Make sure you make it your own. All the writers of the New Testament were involved in the same mission of helping people follow Jesus, but they all put it in their own words when they wrote it down for us. You will be most effective when you learn to do the same.

Like any new skill, the more you practice, the more comfortable you will become.

Happy preaching!

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Chapter 8:

Get Saved if You Aren't!

Seriously! If you have never surrendered your life to the lordship of Jesus Christ and asked Him to wash away your sins and save your soul, don't wait another second! Why would you wait? Is there any good reason to wait to give your life to Jesus? Would you rather exist for one more day on your own without the wisdom, power, peace, and direction of the Creator of the Universe at work in your life?

I can't comprehend why anyone would want to wait. The only people who want to do that are those who love the darkness and whose deeds are evil. They don't want to submit to God. They don't want to get into a right relationship with God because they think they will be able to avoid meeting Him. Somehow they expect they will be able to escape His judgment. But that is impossible! The Scripture is clear and true that says,

"It is appointed for man to die once and after that to face judgment." Hebrews 9:27

So, if you aren't saved, get saved right now! Simply talk to God. The most important thing isn't the words you say; it's the attitude of your heart. You must recognize that you both sin and are sinful. Sins are the things you do that are wrong in the sight of God, things like lying, stealing, lusting, gossiping, overeating (gluttony), etc.

Every person also has a sinful condition (like cancer) that he or she is born with. And every person needs God to remove their sin condition if they have any hope of getting to God's eternal paradise and escaping eternity in hell. To begin a saving relationship with God, you must repent (regret, apologize for, and turn away) from your old life, which is ruled by sin, the flesh, self-gratification, and the powers of darkness.

Jesus doesn't just want you to turn away from one sin or another. He wants you to repent of your entire existence that was ruled and governed by sin and self instead of being ruled by Him. And lastly, in your own words, tell Him that you are finished and done with trying to be the lord of your own life and that from this day forward, you will allow Jesus to be the King, Master, Savior, and Lord of your life.

I heard Keith Green, the famous musician, say, "If Jesus isn't your Lord, then He isn't your Savior either." So, whatever you do, make sure you receive Him as your Savior AND Lord. Otherwise, you haven't received Him at all. "Lord" means that He becomes your ruler, that you submit to His authority in all areas of your life.

Daily Surrender

Not long ago I was messaging with a distraught young lady. When I suggested that she surrender her life to Christ, she assured me that she had "done that" years ago. Yet it was apparent that she was currently NOT living a life that was surrendered to Jesus as her Lord.

After our chat, I realized that she may not know that surrendering your life to Christ is not a one-time thing. It's a *daily* commitment to die to yourself and live in absolute surrender and total dedication to Jesus Christ and living for His will, not our own.

Look at the words of Jesus in Luke 9:23. He says to "deny yourself and take up your cross DAILY and follow Him." We need to do it daily because our selfish, fleshly life wakes up every day and wants to run our own lives. So, if no one has ever told you this, IT IS OK TO SURRENDER YOUR LIFE TO JESUS EVERY DAY! Even multiple times a day if necessary. The goal is to get to a place where every minute of every day is 100% committed, dedicated, and surrendered to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior!

Baptize Them

If you lead a person (or group of people) to Christ, you are responsible for baptizing them. Don't let that intimidate you. It isn't complicated, and it only takes a few minutes. When we conduct a training, we have everyone get a partner, put their hand on their shoulder, and say, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, in the name of the Son, and in the name of the Holy Spirit." Then they pretend to push their partner underwater.

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This is always followed by a lot of laughter. But it is serious business. Part of being a disciple is baptizing people. We must get comfortable with the process of baptizing those we lead to Christ, or we will slow the growth of the Kingdom of Jesus. And DO NOT hand these people off to an already overworked religious professional. If you lead someone to Christ, you should baptize them. It's that simple!

If you are going through this book as a group, I encourage you all to stop, get a partner, and do that right now. If you are alone, look into a mirror, or look at yourself in your phone's camera and practice those words out loud until you are comfortable saying them.

Seriously, stand up, get a partner, put your hand on your partner's shoulder, and say, "INSERT THEIR NAME, I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," and then push down. The person being baptized should cooperate with the push. After one partner has done it, reverse roles and do it again. Don't finish until everyone (who is willing) has had a chance to practice "baptizing" someone. Most people tell me that immediately after this exercise, they feel like they could baptize someone for real that same day.

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Chapter 9:

Obedience to the Commands of Jesus

Notice that the final commands of Jesus are given to the eleven disciples. Notice also that these are His **final** commands, but they are still part of the sum total of all of His commands.

Jesus' last command is to disciple the entire planet by going, preaching, baptizing, and teaching obedience to ALL of His commands. That makes the final command of Jesus the beginning of a chain reaction of disciples who make disciples until He returns. You and I are part of that chain reaction of discipleship which will continue until we see Him face to face. Since He hasn't returned yet, and the whole Earth isn't disciplined yet, every person who claims to follow Christ should be obeying Jesus and making disciples who make more disciples.

The Laws of the King and the Kingdom

Did Jesus give us any commands that He personally did not obey? Think about that for a minute. Did Jesus ever tell His followers to do anything He didn't do? NO! Of course not. So, if He obeyed all the commands He expects us to obey, then, by requiring us to obey all of His commands, He is really just helping us to become more like Him, right?

Obedience to Christ is just another way to say that I am "*imitating Christ*" (1 Corinthians 11:1), or that I'm being "*conformed into the image of Christ*" (Romans 8:29), or that we are attaining the "*fullness of the stature of Christ*" (Ephesians 4:13). And someday, in the not too distant future, He will return to establish His Kingdom here on Earth.

And when He becomes King of the Earth, I have a sneaking suspicion that the commands He gave His followers to obey will be the very laws in His Kingdom. How can I be so sure? Because His commands reflect His character, and He is the Lord and does not change (Malachi 3:6)! It's an intriguing thought that learning to obey Jesus' commands may not only be equipping us for this life but also for life in the Kingdom to come.

As I travel the world, I like to ask for a show of hands of how many people would like to go to America. Almost every hand in the room usually goes up. Then I ask them, "If Donald Trump were the king of America, would he let you into his kingdom if you were unwilling to obey His laws?"

"No way," is the overwhelming answer.

If you said, "King Donald, I'd like all the benefits of citizenship in your kingdom, but I'm not willing to submit to you or the laws of your kingdom." If you said that, would King Trump let you into his kingdom? Of course not.

But that is how many people approach Jesus and His Kingdom. They want all the benefits of Jesus' Kingdom. They just don't want to obey His commands or submit to His Lordship.

I'm here to tell you that this is a dangerous game to play. How much safer it is to obey the laws of Jesus' Kingdom BEFORE He returns than to try and learn to observe them after! "After" will NOT be an option. No one will be given the opportunity to learn to obey the King AFTER His return.

In appendix A you will find a list of all the commands of Christ and where to find them in your Bible. There will be some repetition, and that's ok. If a command is repeated multiple times in the gospels, it must be that God wanted to emphasize it.

After this point in the book I'd suggest that every time you pick up this book, that you look up, write down, and commit to obey at least one of Jesus' commands. You will never be the same.

I've completed one here as an example:

Luke 4:8 ___ Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.

(Y)(N) ___ God, I will worship and serve only You.

Commit to obey all of Jesus' commands in Appendix A at the end of this book. If you do, Jesus will give you plenty of opportunities to obey Him. I know from experience.

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A few years ago, I was attending a weekend conference on obedience-based discipleship in Kansas City, Missouri. A few weeks prior, I had just committed to the Lord (again, and in writing) that I would obey all the commands found in Jesus' major sermons. On the first night of the conference, as my wife, Carrie, and I headed back to our hotel, the gas light came on in my car. I pulled into the nearest gasoline station.

As soon as I got out of the car to begin pumping gas (in the USA, we pump our own gasoline), a large vehicle pulled up on the other side of the pump. The driver of that vehicle got out, stepped between the gas pumps to my side, and walked right up into my personal space. He was a large, intimidating man more than six feet tall with gold teeth and wearing a long, black, leather trench coat.

He looked down at me and said, "Hey man, I've got to get to a gathering across town, and I need some money. Do you have some money I can have? Plus, my car is almost out of gas. Would you put some gas in my car?"

The first thought that entered my mind was, "ARE YOU CRAZY?" I mean, who does that? I thought, "NO, I'm not going to give you money and gas." I was about to politely decline when a second thought came into my mind. This thought was not my own; it was from the Holy Spirit. "Didn't you commit, in writing, to give to anyone who asks of you? And didn't you also state in writing that if anyone takes what is yours, you would not demand it back?" I thought, "Yes, I did that, Lord."

The Holy Spirit continued, "If you don't help this man right now, you have no right to attend an obedience-based discipleship conference!" He said, "If you don't help this man right now, just pack your bags and go home!" Ouch!

So in obedience to Jesus's teachings and the Holy Spirit's prompting, I gave him all the cash in my wallet and put some fuel in his vehicle. He thanked me and said, "God bless you." Then he climbed into his vehicle and drove away.

I just stood there stunned for a moment, thinking, "Did that really just happen?" And, "I wonder if that guy was really an angel." So, I say again, if you commit to obey all of Jesus' commands, don't be surprised when He gives you the opportunity to do so. Jesus will bless your obedience.

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Chapter 10:

Words Lose Their Meanings Over Time

Here are a few words that sometimes have different meanings today than they did when they were used in the Bible. For our discussion, we will establish a first-century understanding of these words so that we can operate with the same understanding that Jesus and the New Testament disciples had regarding these terms.

What Does It Mean to Preach?

Who is supposed to preach? And who is supposed to receive the preaching?

Let's start by taking a look at Acts 8:1:

"And Saul approved of their killing him. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria."

Isn't this interesting? In Acts 1:8, Jesus tells them they would be His witnesses to Judea and Samaria, but they had yet to go. They were enjoying the fellowship and the excitement of the world's first megachurch right there in Jerusalem.

A pastor sitting in the front row of a training in Nairobi, Kenya, heard this and said, "You know what that tells me?" I asked, "What is that?" He replied, "It tells me that if we won't GO out of obedience, then we will GO because of persecution!" Wow, what a thought. May we always be "going" out of obedience, so we aren't forced to "go" because of persecution!

Another thing to note from this passage is the reduction in numbers. At the time of the stoning of Stephen, how many people had become followers of Jesus in Jerusalem since Pentecost? Peter's first sermon brought 3000 souls to Jesus (Acts 2:41). And then after his second sermon, the number grew to 5000 (Acts 4:4). Plus, it says that the Lord added daily to their number those who were being saved (Acts 2:47, 5:14). So most people I train estimate that the church had grown to somewhere between 5,000 and 10,000 souls by the time Stephen was stoned. And it says that they were ALL scattered except for the apostles. That means they went from more than 5,000 to as few as twelve! That would be quite a blow.

Why were they scattered? They were scattered because one follower of Jesus was stoned to death, and they didn't want to be next. What would you take with you if you had to flee for your life today? Most people tell me they would take the clothes on their backs and the people they love...and that's it. If it is real and serious persecution, you don't even go home to pack. You just run for your lives.

I know a young woman who was living in South Sudan with her boyfriend and their baby when a murderous, bloody persecution came to their village in the middle of the night. She picked up her baby and ran into the darkness. Her boyfriend, and father of her child, also ran into the night. In the confusion, they were separated and in the more than ten years since that night, she hasn't seen or heard from him. She doesn't even know if he is still alive. That is what it may have been like when Stephen was stoned. People fled for their lives.

But we are talking about preaching. So what does preaching have to do with persecution? Think about this for a minute...what do you need to preach? Or, what are the ingredients necessary for preaching to take place? Must you be or have an ordained pastor or teacher present to preach? No. Do you need a microphone to preach? No. How about a pulpit? Nope. What about a tent or a religious auditorium? Not necessary. Do you need people sitting neatly in nice rows to hear you? No, you don't NEED any of those things.

And if you are running for your life, you definitely don't take things that will slow you down. You certainly wouldn't take the things so many think we need to "preach." And a person running for their life would definitely NOT try to carry a pulpit, microphone, plastic chairs, or a sound system!

When you boil it down to its core elements, preaching really only requires three things:

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A preacher (a person to share the message).

The message (the actual words of the good news of salvation that will be shared).

A recipient (the person who will hear the message from the preacher).

An Atheist Preaches the Gospel

My eldest son and I were once doing evangelism on a college campus in Caracas, Venezuela. As I talked to a couple of students (boyfriend and girlfriend) who identified themselves as atheists, my son walked up with an EvangeCube in his hand. This is a manipulative device you configure in different ways, and the emerging pictures can be used to share the gospel. The young woman saw the cube and snatched it from my son's hand. She remembered it from her years in Sunday School as a little girl.

She said, "Let me see if I can remember all the stages." Now remember, she identified herself as an atheist. Still, at some point she had been taught how to use this EvangeCube to share the gospel. So she went through the entire gospel, from the creation of the world all the way through to the resurrection of Christ and the need to receive him as Lord and Savior to be born again and live forever in the paradise of God.

When she finished, she handed the EvangeCube back to my son, and her atheist boyfriend turned to me and said, "I'd like to pray to receive Christ." We led him in a prayer right then and there and in front of his atheist girlfriend who had just "accidentally" led him to faith and salvation in Jesus Christ. God can even use

an atheist to lead another atheist to Christ through the power of the Gospel, even though that atheist didn't even believe what she was preaching.

I tell you this story to make the point that the gospel has power all by itself, even if the person sharing it is an atheist and doesn't believe it.

Now let's look at Acts 8:4.

"Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went."

What did they do? They PREACHED THE WORD! Where did they do it? WHEREVER THEY WENT! Why did they do it? Because they had been commanded by Jesus to do it. And who was doing the preaching? That's right, it was the 5000-10000 unschooled, ordinary, nameless, faceless disciples of Jesus Christ who had been commanded by their Master to preach the word everywhere they went.

Remember that the disciples, to whom Jesus gave the command to "preach the good news to all creation," were also the ones who were viewed as "unschooled, ordinary people" (Acts 4:13). So, if you are an unschooled ordinary person, you should feel right at home preaching the gospel. Sometimes we think preaching is only a professional Christian's job, but it is not. Preaching is part of the Great Commission and therefore applies to ALL disciples of Jesus.

In the church, the leader's job is actually to equip the saints (everyone who follows Christ) for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:12). Therefore, preaching is part of the job description of every disciple of Jesus—every person who claims to follow Christ. It is NOT just the job of the professionals.

The largest group I've ever spoken to (as of this writing) was about 10000 people in a large church auditorium on a Sunday morning in Lagos, Nigeria. The congregation was seated in front of me, and the church leaders were off to my left. I asked the 10000 church members how many felt they could confidently share the gospel and lead someone to faith in Christ out on the street.

Out of 10000 people, only a few hundred hands went up (about 3%), so I turned to the leaders and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, we've got work to do. Because, as leaders, it's our job to equip the saints for the work of ministry. And if these people don't feel confident sharing the gospel, then they are not yet as equipped for the work of ministry as they need to be."

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If you are a “professional” Christian, take a moment and ask yourself, “Are the members of my congregation equipped, ready, willing, and encouraged to share the gospel wherever they go?” If not, then you also have more work to do in helping them make the transition into true disciple-makers in the Kingdom of Jesus.

What Is the Church to Jesus?

What is the church really? When Jesus used the word “church,” what did He mean? Would it surprise you to learn that Jesus did not invent the word church? When He used it, He didn’t need to define it because it was a common word everyone knew. In Greek, the word was “*ekklesia*,” meaning an official gathering for an official purpose. The word *ekklesia* had nothing to do with religion.

So when the Pharisees and Sadducees gathered to discuss how to destroy Jesus, that would be the “how to destroy Jesus” church (or *ekklesia*). And if the Roman soldiers gathered together to discuss better methods of crucifixion, that would be the “better methods of crucifixion” church (*ekklesia*). Does that make sense?

Acts 19:32, 39, & 41 are the only places in the Bible where “*ekklesia*” is properly translated as “assembly.” That is because the word *ekklesia* is used here to describe the people who assembled for a riot in Ephesus.

William Tyndale (who translated the Bible into English) refused to translate the word “*ekklesia*” as “church” because he felt it conveyed the wrong meaning. He preferred “congregation” to NOT give people the impression that the *ekklesia* of Jesus had anything to do with a religious gathering in a religious auditorium presided over by religious professionals. (<https://www.newmatthewbible.org/ecclesia.pdf>)

The word CHURCH actually comes from the Scandinavian word *kirk* which DOES refer to a religious gathering in a religious building presided over by religious professionals. (<https://www.gotquestions.org/meaning-of-church.html>) But Jesus said *ekklesia*. He did not say *kirk* (or the Greek version of *kirk*, if there even was one). Therefore, His *ekklesia* is simply His gathering of His people for His purposes. This may be true even if only two or three gathered in His name (Matthew 18:19-20). Many today feel that two or three gathered in His name is the simplest form of the true *ekklesia* of Jesus! And I agree!

Once, I was in an area in the south of Kenya called the Masai Mara, training people in first-century discipleship. The group I was training was about 75% women, and it didn’t take long for me to realize that most of these women could not read or write. Since people who can’t read and write are usually very good at memorization, I decided to alter the training. I asked these ladies if they had memorized their favorite Bible stories and passages, and they had.

Then, I taught them something called the Discovery Bible Study (DBS) process and had them memorize it. This process is used as the seed for church planting in Disciple-Making Movements. I told them to go out and find other women in the Masai area, share their favorite Bible stories with them, and then discuss those stories using the DBS process.

So these ladies began gathering other women, sharing Bible stories, and encouraging each other to adjust how they lived to align with what God requires. Within just a few weeks, the ladies had started fourteen New Testament churches. Most of us would call them illiterate, yet they could still expand the Kingdom of Jesus by simply sharing the Word of God that they had memorized!

He Answered My Prayer

For many years in my own life, I asked the Lord what “church” meant to Him. Then one day, I felt like He answered me right out of the pages of the Bible. I was reading Matthew 16:18, which says,

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” (NKJV)

I was blown away! I had read that verse many times but never really saw what it said.

First, Jesus is not saying He will build His *ekklesia* (church) on Peter because if you read this in the original Greek, Jesus is actually making a play on words here. Peter had just said, “You are the CHRIST (Messiah), the son of the living God.” That foundational truth is most likely the “rock” Jesus was referring to in this verse. Because when He

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calls Peter a rock, He uses the word *petros*. This word refers to a small stone, like the kind of rock David used in his sling when he killed Goliath. But then, Jesus uses a different Greek word for the rock upon which He will build his church. He uses the word *petra*, which is the word for a massive rock like a mountain, foundation stone, or bedrock.

Jesus was literally saying that Peter was a small stone (one that Jesus could move wherever and whenever He wanted) but that the rock He was to build HIS fellowship (*ekklesia*) upon is as solid and immovable as bedrock! And that bedrock is the fact that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of the living God!

The second half of this verse contains a ton of information. Think about those words: “The gates of hell will not prevail against it.” Some translations say, “will not overcome it” or “will not withstand it.” I find it interesting that Jesus even brings hell into the conversation at all. Maybe Jesus did this because of where He was standing when He spoke about building His *ekklesia*. Jesus and His disciples had traveled to the city of Caesarea Philippi, considered by the local pagans to contain the “Gate to Hell” (the underworld).

I love what Ray Vander Laan from “That the World May Know” says about this event in this article:
<https://www.thatttheworldmayknow.com/gates-of-hell-article>

City of Pagans

Caesarea Philippi, which stood in a lush area near the foot of Mount Hermon, was a city dominated by immoral activities and pagan worship.

Caesarea Philippi stood only twenty-five miles from the religious communities of Galilee. But the city’s religious practices were vastly different from those of the nearby Jewish towns.

In Old Testament times, the northeastern area of Israel became a center for Baal worship. In the nearby city of Dan, Israelite king Jeroboam built the high place that angered God and eventually led the Israelites to worship false gods. Eventually, worship of the baals was replaced with worship of Greek fertility gods.

Caesarea Philippi became the religious center for worship of the Greek god, Pan. The Greeks named the city Panias in his honor.

Years later, when Romans conquered the territory, Herod Philip rebuilt the city and named it after himself. But Caesarea Philippi continued to focus on worship of Greek gods. In the cliff that stood above the city, local people built shrines and temples to Pan.

Interestingly, Jesus chose to deliver a sort of “graduation speech” to his disciples at Caesarea Philippi. In that pagan setting, he said he would build a church that would overcome the defenses of the devil.

The Gates of Hell

To the pagan mind, the cave at Caesarea Philippi created a gate to the underworld, where fertility gods lived during the winter. They committed detestable acts to worship these false gods.

Caesarea Philippi’s location was especially unique because it stood at the base of a cliff where spring water flowed. At one time, the water ran directly from the mouth of a cave set in the bottom of the cliff.

The pagans of Jesus’ day commonly believed that their fertility gods lived in the underworld during the winter and returned to Earth each spring. They saw water as a symbol of the underworld and thought that their gods traveled to and from that world through caves.

...They believed that their city was literally at the gates of the underworld, the gates of hell. In order to entice the return of their god, Pan, each year, the people of Caesarea Philippi engaged in horrible deeds, including prostitution and sexual interaction between humans and goats.

When Jesus brought his disciples to the area, they must have been shocked. Caesarea Philippi was like a red-light district in their world and devout Jews would have avoided any contact with the despicable acts committed there.

It was a city of people eagerly knocking on the doors of hell.

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Jesus' Challenge

Jesus presented a clear challenge with his words at Caesarea Philippi: He didn't want his followers hiding from evil: He wanted them to storm the gates of hell.

Standing near the pagan temples of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked his disciples "Who do you say that I am?" Peter boldly replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." The disciples were probably stirred by the contrast between Jesus, the true and living God, and the false hopes of the pagans who trusted in "dead" gods.

Jesus continued, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it (see Matt. 16:13-20)."

But Why the Conflict?

At this moment and in this setting, Jesus chooses to emphasize the conflict between His *ekklesia* and the defenses of hell. Suddenly His *ekklesia* (fellowship/church) is at odds with hell. Let me ask, in this passage, who is attacking whom? Who is actually on the attack and who is protecting themselves?

When I ask that question in a training session, people usually tell me that hell is attacking the church. But is that what it says? People tend to say that because they've heard that their whole lives in church or Sunday school, but is that what the passage really says?

Look at it again. It says, "the **gates** of hell will not withstand it." "It" is the *ekklesia* of Jesus. "It" is the followers of Jesus. "It" is supposed to be you and me!

How many people use a gate as their weapon of choice to fight a battle? How many militaries worldwide teach their soldiers to fight battles with a gate as their offensive weapon? None do. It's simply not done. And that is because gates are used for defense and protection. They are NEVER used for offense or for attack!

So if the powers of hell were attacking the *ekklesia* (fellowship) of Jesus, then this verse should say, "the gates of the church will be stronger than the attack of hell." But that's NOT what it says. On the contrary, it says that hell's gates (defenses) will be weaker and fall to the assault of the *ekklesia* (fellowship, gathering of obedient followers, church) of Jesus.

Therefore, this verse does NOT say that hell is attacking the *ekklesia* (church) of Jesus! IT ACTUALLY SAYS THE GATHERING OF JESUS' FOLLOWERS IS ATTACKING AND OVERPOWERING THE DEFENSES OF HELL ITSELF! Is that how you view Jesus' church?

Vander Laan's article goes on to say,

"Gates "are" defensive structures... By saying that the gates of hell would not overcome, Jesus suggested that those gates were going to be attacked.

Standing as they were at a literal "Gate of Hades," the disciples may have been overwhelmed by Jesus' challenge. They had studied under their rabbi for several years, and now he was commissioning them to a huge task: to attack evil, and to build the church on the very places that were most filled with moral corruption.

Don't miss the desire of Jesus here. As stated above:

Jesus presented a clear challenge with his words at Caesarea Philippi: He didn't want his followers hiding from evil: He wanted them to storm the gates of hell."

Did you get that? When Jesus gave this teaching, He was literally standing in a city that contained a cave that the local pagans thought was "the gate to hell." Jesus says that His *ekklesia* (fellowship, church) will be attacking and overpowering the defenses of hell.

Why would we want to do that? Why would the fellowship of Jesus' followers want to attack the gates of hell?

My guess is that you lock your gate or your doors at night. And why do you do that? To protect yourself and your possessions, right? So, if someone attacks your home and overpowers your gate or locked doors, what is their motivation? They either want to do you harm, or they want to steal your possessions, right?

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So I'll ask again, why would the *ekklesia* of Jesus want to break into the territory of hell by attacking and overpowering hell's gates? We can't really do any harm to demons or the powers of darkness, can we?

But if we can't harm them, what can we do?

We can steal their possessions! That's right, as Jesus' *ekklesia*, we are supposed to attack and overpower the defenses of the devil so we can PLUNDER HELL! Jesus is saying that the *ekklesia* He builds will take lost souls from the kingdom of darkness and bring them into the Kingdom of Light!

Therefore, the *ekklesia* (church) of Jesus is not so much about religious meetings in religious buildings presided over by religious professionals. And it's not about listening to religious speeches for an hour a week. Instead, it IS about operating as a force that attacks and overpowers the defenses of hell to take lost souls from the devil and bring them to eternal life through a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

I don't think it's too strong a statement to say that any organization or group of people that claims to be the church of Jesus but is not attacking the gates of hell and taking souls from the devil is NOT Jesus' church, no matter what they say they are.

Storming the Gates

A few years ago, a couple of our trained disciple makers in East Africa approached a group of about 30 female sex workers to share the gospel with them. These women had about eighteen children among them, so the group was about 48 people in all. They all lived in the same rented room, a large hall that was used as their living space. Our disciple makers tried to share the gospel with them but were turned away. The women said they were learning to practice witchcraft and were not interested in hearing the gospel.

Now, in that part of Africa, customers don't always pay prostitutes for their services. So the motivation for a prostitute to learn witchcraft is to put a curse on clients who don't pay. In this part of Africa, witchcraft is widespread, and almost everyone believes in it. Most people there have seen witchcraft's real and powerful effects firsthand.

Upon being rejected, the disciple makers went away and asked God what to do. They felt like the Lord told them to go back. So they went back and were rejected a second time. They went away and prayed again.

Again, they felt like the Lord told them to go back. So they went a third time and were, you guessed it, rejected again. So they went away and prayed a third time, and felt like the Lord told them to go back a fourth time!

How many of us would go back four times? But, desiring to be obedient to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, they went back, and this time rather than rejecting them, the prostitutes said, "Okay, tell us your message." It was as if they were saying, "If you won't go away without telling us your message, tell us your message and then go away."

So the disciple makers shared the gospel with the prostitutes. And the prostitutes were convicted of their sin and need for salvation through Jesus Christ! They realized that the power offered to them through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was greater than any power they could ever gain through witchcraft. So they discussed it amongst themselves, and as a group, they all surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ on the same day.

That's when the disciple makers messaged me. They were so excited about all these women who had come to Christ, and they wanted to receive some assistance in helping them find new lines of work. I told them that we would work to find new jobs but that they should NOT all quit prostitution on the same day because that would mean 48 people suddenly wouldn't have any income and couldn't pay their rent or buy food. If I'm honest, my faith was too small and I was concerned that these women and children would starve while we were trying to find them new jobs from half a world away.

He did that in a wonderful way!

You see, in Disciple-Making Movements, people are taught to read the word of God and put it into practice in their own lives. So, these new sisters in Christ were still working as prostitutes while also reading the Bible together. They came across the passage that says, "Honor God with your body" (1 Corinthians 6:20). They discussed it amongst

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themselves and decided to trust Jesus. They determined that it was not honoring to God to continue working as prostitutes. So they quit! All 30 of them left prostitution on the same day!

As you can imagine, this was a significant concern for me and the disciple-makers who led them to Christ. But God (I love that phrase), in His wisdom, had arranged all of the details and put the pieces into place long before the women, the disciple-makers, or I even knew what would transpire. God “just so happened” to have provided me with a friend in that very same city who specialized in urban development. The Lord also gathered the body of Christ around this need. Many people gave as they were prompted by the Lord. The women were interviewed to determine their skills and interests. Within just a few weeks, these ladies were working as hairdressers, cooks, selling fruit and vegetables, clothes, etc. They also immediately began discipling the other prostitutes of that area to Christ! Praise the Lord!

This is an example of what it looks like when a “genuine” *ekklesia* of Jesus’ followers is actually operating as the *ekklesia* of Jesus. That is what it looks like to attack and overpower the defenses of hell! That is what it looks like to prevail against the gates of hell and to plunder hell by taking lost souls from the devil and bringing them to the Kingdom of Light. Amen?

Think about it. Prostitution and witchcraft are things the devil promotes. These are things that are in his area of operation and expertise. He can hide behind gates like these. But these disciple-makers weren’t put off or deterred by prostitution or witchcraft. Instead, they kept attacking and attacking those defenses until the gates of hell collapsed. Then they were able to plunder the devil, take possessions from him, and bring all 48 precious souls to Jesus!

May Jesus give you and me many opportunities to be His true church as Jesus intends. May you and I be used by God to rescue countless souls from the devil and bring them to eternal life in the Paradise of God!

What is a Pastor According to the Bible?

Let’s look at the word and role of a pastor for a minute. If you have a pastor or if you are a pastor, I mean you no harm or disrespect. I must point out the New Testament examples of pastors and how they differ from our understanding of pastors today. And it’s actually quite simple. THERE AREN’T ANY.

You may think I’m crazy. You may ask, “Kurt, are you saying there aren’t any pastors in the Bible?” I’d have to answer, “You are correct. No single person has the job or title of pastor in the Bible.”

The word wrongly translated as “pastor” is *poimen* in the original Greek and is used eighteen times in the New Testament. Seventeen of those, *poimen* is correctly translated as “shepherd,” and only once (Ephesians 4:11) is it **incorrectly** translated as “pastors” in most Bible translations. Why is that?

Here is what seems to have happened. The word “pastor” comes from the Latin verb pasture, which, when used as a verb, is the act of placing the sheep where they can eat grass. It is possible to “pasture the sheep,” which would be another way to say put them out to pasture so they can eat some grass. Before the Bible was translated into English, it was written in Latin. And when it was being read in Latin, the title, role, and job of “pastor” developed in the Protestant church system. This is the title that replaced “priest” in the Roman Catholic system during the Reformation. So, the title of pastor was used to describe men whose occupation was to oversee or “shepherd” a group of believers (flock).

The word “poimen” in Ephesians 4:11 is usually translated as “pastors” instead of “shepherds” because otherwise, the word “pastor” wouldn’t exist in the English translations of the Bible at all. But that isn’t a very good reason to translate it that way. If this verse were translated correctly, there would be zero biblical precedent for calling professional Christian leaders “pastors” today. Using the title of “pastor” would have zero biblical support. Can you imagine a congregation saying, “Why do we call the leader ‘pastor’ when the word doesn’t exist in the Bible?” That might be difficult for the church leader to explain. So ask yourself the firewall question; “Can I name even one person who had the title of pastor and single-handedly oversaw the affairs of a local fellowship in the New Testament?” It’s just not there, is it?

Now, I am not saying that there aren’t people who care for the souls of others in the Bible. But in the Bible, they are usually called elders or overseers (plural), and they are usually in some form of team leadership. Team leadership

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works well because one person doesn't have to carry the whole burden of an entire group or congregation by themselves, as well as safeguarding against one person's downfall or errant theology. In 1 Peter 5:2, Peter told the elders to "shepherd the flock" entrusted to them. Notice that it was a group of elders (plural) and NOT just one "pastor." Even in the one place where we find the word *poimen* INCORRECTLY translated as "pastors" in (Ephesians 4:11) it is actually in the plural form and listed among other plural leadership gifts.

"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors (should say shepherds) and teachers."

Notice that **all** of these leadership gifts are plural, meaning there should not be just one of any of them. The millions of disciples multiplying around the world today have elders and deacons who oversee the affairs of the home and town, city, and village churches

Many people with the job and title of pastor have told me they don't understand why the people in their congregations don't tend to mature. These pastors preach the truth week after week. Still, many feel like a babysitter just spoon-feeding spiritual infants year after year.

A few years ago, I was privileged to address Nigeria's pentecostal pastors' fellowship. There were about 500 pastors and their wives in attendance. My time was short, so when I got on stage, I asked them, "How many of you feel like a babysitter?" They stared at me in stunned silence, so I asked them again. "How many of you feel like you preach the truth week after week, but for some strange reason, the people don't seem to mature; they seem to remain spiritual infants?"

As far as I could tell, every hand in the room went up! Wow! That should tell us something! And that something indicates a real problem. Something is wrong! I told them the problem is a lack of discipleship which is the real purpose of the leadership gifts.

Feeding the Sheep

Think about this: how does a real shepherd of actual sheep feed them? Does he spend all week chewing up green grass to spit it into a bowl and spoon-feed the sheep on Sunday morning? Does he let the sheep starve for six days a week and only feed them on Sundays? Of course not! He simply places the sheep in an environment with plenty of grass, and the sheep feed themselves! That's the real role of a true shepherd (pastor) of Jesus. Teach them to feed themselves!

If you are a pastor, I'm here to tell you that if you want to see the people you are shepherding truly grow and mature, teach them to feed themselves. Learn how to place them in "green pasture," where there is always plenty of spiritual food to nourish them whenever they are hungry. They need to learn how to depend on God and not on you alone. If they only know how to learn from you they struggle to ever mature.

Remember from Chapter 6 that in Ephesians 4:11-14 Paul addresses the issue of people remaining spiritual infants when they should attain "the fullness of the stature of Christ" or Christlikeness. In this passage, Paul clearly states that people are NOT supposed to remain infants, tossed around by every new wind of teaching. Instead, they should have unity, mature, and come to the fullness of the stature of Christ.

Verses 11 and 12 explain the process for the saints to achieve real maturity. In verse 11, we read that Jesus gave the church five leadership gifts: apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers with the purpose in verse 12 of—don't miss this—EQUIPPING THE SAINTS (all followers of Jesus) FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY!

So, pastors, your job is NOT to DO ministry as much as it is to equip the saints you shepherd to DO the work of ministry! This applies to all of you apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers as well. Therefore, the followers of Christ need all five leadership gifts active in their spiritual development in some way in order to mature and become like Christ and not remain spiritual babies.

If the leaders don't equip the saints for the work of the ministry, then the people remain infants and don't mature. And if the people don't mature, they will never know their gifts. If they don't know their gifts, they will never use them to benefit the body of Christ or to advance the Kingdom of Jesus. When you were an infant, being spoon-fed by your

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momma, did you know what your gifts would be when you grew up? Of course not! It takes maturity (experience) to discover your gifts!

Recently, I was in the home of a sick woman with a saint (disciple) that I am helping to equip for the work of ministry. The saint looked at me and said, "Well, you are ordained, so you should anoint her with oil and pray for her." I replied, "You are a saint being equipped for the work of ministry, so you go ahead and anoint her with oil and pray for her, and I'll join you in prayer." And that is precisely what we did.

If you are "in ministry" don't DO all the ministry yourself. That is not God's plan, and it keeps believers in spiritual infancy. Instead, mature the saints under your care by equipping them to DO the work of the ministry! THAT IS WHY JESUS GAVE YOU THE GIFT!! Equipping does not mean telling only. It will also involve demonstrating and practicing with them. It will be more like coaching than teaching and involves much on-the-job training.

Pastor, you can't lead people beyond where you are. You must be willing to do everything you ask them to do so you can "set an example for the believers." If you aren't willing to live as a true disciple of Jesus, the people you lead won't be either.

When I was asked to baptize college students in Lake Victoria, Uganda, I only agreed to do it if I was assisted by one of the student leaders. I ended up only helping in one baptism, and then I took a step back and taught them to baptize each other. In our ministry, we teach that if a person is an obedient disciple of Jesus, then Jesus has already given them the authority to be a disciple who makes disciples. And this includes baptizing. These students simply needed to gain the confidence to baptize. You can watch the full baptism training on YouTube by searching the title "College Student Baptism in Lake Victoria Uganda 2017."

What is a Christian?

Now let's talk about what the word "Christian" really means. How many times did Jesus use the word Christian? ZERO. How many times did Jesus say that His purpose was to start a religion called Christianity? ZERO! How many times is the word Christian found in the Bible?

At a training in Uganda in 2015, I asked that question to a group of young men and women in their twenties, and one of the young ladies responded, "Oh, it must be thousands." She was a little off.

Many people think that since the followers of Jesus refer to themselves as Christians today, the word must be in the Bible many times. But nothing could be further from the truth. The word "Christian" is only found in the original Greek of the New Testament three times. Twice it's used by pagans, and once it's used by Peter, and he seems to be referring to how the pagans were calling the followers of Christ "Christians." Let's look at the first use of the word "Christian" and see what we can learn.

The first time the word "Christian" is used in the Bible is in Acts 11:26:

"and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."

The first thing to notice is that the disciples did not call themselves Christians. They were actually called Christians by someone other than themselves. That means it would be the non-Christians or the "lost" people of Antioch who decided to call them Christians. Have you ever wondered why they chose to call them that?

Many people today say it is because they were such excellent examples of what Jesus Himself was like. Maybe, maybe not. Maybe not, because there is no record of Jesus ever going to Antioch. And if Jesus never went to Antioch, how could the people of Antioch know what He was like?

I have another theory that I'd like to share. Consider this possibility: in 1 Corinthians 1:23, Paul said that declaring that the Messiah had been crucified was a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles.

"but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles."

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Paul is saying that they preach that the Messiah had been crucified. This was very difficult for the Jews to accept because they thought their Messiah would come and kick out the Romans and rule and reign from Jerusalem forever.

This teaching was also “foolishness” to Gentiles because even the Gentiles around the Mediterranean Sea knew that the Jews were expecting their Messiah. And they believed if the Jewish Messiah ever did come, He would be a political and military ruler that would rule forever from Jerusalem.

That’s what everyone in the Mediterranean region thought at that time. No one, not the Jews nor the Gentiles, believed that the Messiah would come and allow Himself to be executed, then rise from the dead and return to heaven for 2000+ years! They didn’t know that His Kingdom was an eternal, spiritual Kingdom. They were all expecting an earthly king with an earthly kingdom.

So, it is quite likely that the pagans of Antioch nicknamed the disciples “Christians” as a way to call them the “fools who believed that the Jewish Messiah (Christ) had been executed.” And NOT because they strongly resembled the Jesus they had never met.

The second time we see the word “Christian” appear in the Bible is in Acts 26:28-29. This time it is used by King Agrippa when Paul is on trial.

Then Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?”

Paul replied, “Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.”

Paul is sharing with Agrippa about the Kingdom of God, probably making him uncomfortable. Agrippa was a politician, and politicians excel at manipulating language to suit their own agendas. So it seems like Agrippa worms his way out of an uncomfortable interaction by employing the word “Christian” in front of Paul, the audience, and whoever else was listening. Agrippa takes advantage of the word “Christian” when he says, “Paul, do you think that you can make me into a ‘Christian’ (those fools who believe in a crucified Messiah) in such a short time?”

Notice that Paul does not accept that title or call himself a Christian. Paul specifically avoids the use of that word. Instead, he basically says, “I hope everyone within the sound of my voice becomes *what I am*.” He did NOT say, “I hope everyone within the sound of my voice becomes a Christian.” Isn’t that interesting? Maybe that’s because, at that time, “Christian” was a derogatory title and NOT a compliment.

The third time the word “Christian” is used is by Peter in 1 Peter 4:16. In this case, the title was associated with suffering, and it was something they were tempted to be ashamed of. It was a name they had to BEAR. Look closely at what Peter says:

“However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.”

Now let’s look back at Acts 11:26 again. Notice that the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. But what were they called before that? They were called disciples. But isn’t that just the opposite of how we think in the church world today? Don’t we call people Christians before we call them disciples? And don’t most of us have a pretty vague idea of what a disciple even is? How can we expect to “hit the target” of discipleship if we don’t even know what we’re aiming for?

Did the Disciples Adopt the Title “Christian?”

If you set up a tent in your city center, had a gospel presentation (think “tent revival”), and many people came to Christ at your event, what would you call those people the following day?

They heard the gospel one evening, responded to it, surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ, and received him as Lord and Savior. So what would you call them the very next morning? Would you call them new converts? Would you call them baby Christians? Maybe you would call them new believers. But ask yourself honestly if you would call them “disciples” the day after they got saved. You probably wouldn’t. Most people wouldn’t. That’s because we’ve been taught that discipleship is based on maturity, but is that what the Bible teaches?

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The truth is that most people in the church world today would never refer to someone as a disciple the day after their conversion. And that is a clear indication that most people in the church world today don't really understand biblical, first-century discipleship.

Let's take a look at Acts 14:21 to get a better understanding of how the early church understood discipleship.

They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples.

What did they win? Disciples, that's right! It does not say they won Christians, new converts, or baby believers. It says they won disciples. This passage comes three chapters after they had been called or nicknamed Christians in Antioch. Yet notice that they had not picked up or adopted the title of "Christian." These preachers are the very same people who had been called Christians in Antioch. Yet they still call the people who come to Christ "disciples" and NOT "Christians."

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Chapter 11: What is a Disciple?

The early church understood that if a person was following a rabbi, they were a disciple of that rabbi. And that's the key! It's that simple! You see, discipleship has nothing to do with maturity or how much Scripture a person has memorized. It isn't even about how much of your rabbi's teaching you know. It only depends upon whether or not you are following your rabbi.

In Jesus' day, being a disciple was NOT about maturity. It was all about who you followed. And nothing has changed! It is still the same today. If a person is following Jesus, they are a disciple of Jesus. Period.

Matthew's Calling

Look at Matthew's calling in Mark 2:14 for a second.

As he walked along, he saw Levi, son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

Matthew was a tax collector. When he was sitting in a chair at his tax collector's booth, what was his job title? Tax collector, right?

Then Jesus walked past him, looked at him, and said, "Follow Me." So Matthew got out of his chair and began to follow Jesus down the street. Once he did that, what do you think his title would have been? Would he still have been viewed as a tax collector? Of course not.

When people in first-century Israel saw a man following a rabbi down the street, they knew that man was a disciple of the rabbi he was following. In the case of Matthew, he would have been considered a disciple of Jesus by his culture even though he had not heard any of Jesus' teaching yet, and he hadn't even gotten saved again yet.

The same thing is true today. The person following Jesus is a disciple of Jesus as long as they continue following Jesus. It doesn't matter if a person just started following Jesus today or if they've been following Him for years. What matters is that they are actually following Him in obedience.

It is also important to note that if a person ever decides to stop following their rabbi, they would no longer be considered a disciple of that rabbi. Let's look at John 6:66 and see this happen to Jesus.

From this time many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him.

Do you think the culture still viewed these people as disciples of Jesus once they no longer followed Jesus? Of course not. The way to tell if a person was a rabbi's disciple was to watch them and see whether or not they were following their rabbi.

The same is true today. If you and I are following Jesus, then we are Jesus' disciples. And, if we claim to be His disciples but don't actually follow Him, then we're not really His disciples, even if we claim that we are.

Do Christians Go to Heaven?

This may shock you, but the Bible does not teach that Christians go to Heaven. It simply doesn't say that. It actually says that Christians who aren't genuinely in a right relationship with God go to hell. Let's look at Matthew 7:21-23 to see what Jesus says about this:

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

So let me ask you, do these people go to heaven? If, on Judgement Day, Jesus says to them, "Away from me, you evildoers," they're probably not on their way to heaven, are they? Sadly, instead of going to Heaven, they are being sent to hell.

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Take a close look at this passage. What is the title that these people use for Jesus? What do they call him? They call him “Lord, Lord,” don’t they? Now take a minute and think about the population of the world. Think about all the different religions of the world and ask yourself what religious group calls Jesus, Lord? Do the Muslims call him Lord? No, they do not. Do the Hindus call him Lord? Nope. How about the Buddhists? They don’t, either. What about the atheists? They certainly don’t call Jesus, Lord. No, Christians are the only people in the world that call Jesus Lord.

So, if you read this passage again, Jesus is saying, “Not every Christian who refers to me as their Lord is actually going to go to Heaven.” He says that on Judgment Day, many people will call Him “Lord, Lord.” Then they will list all of their spiritual and religious activities. But He will respond to them and say, “Get away from me, you workers of evil, because I never knew you.” Wow! The key is not what we call Him or what we have done in His name, but whether or not we truly know Him.

In verse 21, Jesus says ONLY those who do the will of His Father will make it into Heaven. So what exactly IS the will of the Father? Thankfully Jesus tells us in John 6:29. Here it is in the Amplified Bible:

Jesus answered, “This is the work of God: that you believe [adhere to, trust in, rely on, and have faith] in the One whom He has sent.”

So, if you and I truly adhere to, trust in, rely on, and have faith in Jesus, then we are promised eternal life.

What about Judas?

We all know that the disciple Judas did not go to Heaven. This is clear because the Bible says Judas was a “son of perdition” (hell). Jesus said, “It would have been better for him if he had not been born.” Those are not things you would say about someone on their way to Heaven. Judas fits the description of the person in the above passage. Judas would have called Jesus Lord, and he was sent out to preach the gospel, heal the sick, and cast out demons. He had done all those things but lost his soul because he didn’t really know (trust in, rely on, etc...) Jesus!

As I conducted this training in central Illinois, USA, one of the couples from Mississippi went home profoundly impacted by the things they had learned. The training ended on a Sunday, and the wife reviewed her notes daily. God kept revealing new things to her. She woke up Wednesday morning to an alarming revelation and said, “Oh my God, I’m Judas!” She had been in the church her whole life but had never truly surrendered her life to Jesus. So she gave her life to Jesus right then and there! Her husband baptized her in their pond that very same day! Glory to God!

Christians Who are Not Disciples of Jesus?

Let me ask another question. Are there any followers of Jesus in the Bible who would not be considered disciples of Jesus? Or, to put it another way, can you think of any Christians in the New Testament who are not disciples of Jesus? Of course, you can’t. That is because there aren’t any!

Consider the population of the world in relation to Christ. Do you think of the entire world population and then imagine another smaller group (maybe one third) that identifies as Christians? Then inside that group, do you imagine there is a smaller sliver, a tiny little subset, that we would call disciples of Jesus? Is that how you view the global population? If so, you’re not alone. That’s how most Christian church members (and the people we train) view the world’s population in light of Christianity.

But in the New Testament, that is not how things looked. In the New Testament, there is no such thing as a Christian who is not a disciple of Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, people are either disciples of Jesus Christ, or they are lost. There is no middle ground! There are no different classes of followers of Jesus Christ.

Now think again about the world population today. There are billions of people on the planet, and as I write this book, about one-third claim to be Christians. Still, many of those who claim to be Christians, according to Jesus, are not going to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. From God’s point of view (which is the only point of view that really matters), there are still only two groups of people on the planet. There are those who follow Jesus as His obedient disciples, and there are those who do not.

Those who truly know Jesus and obey Him are on their way to eternal life with Him in Paradise. And everyone else, including many Christians who don’t truly know and obey Him, are on their way to hell and eternal doom and torment

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and destruction in the lake of fire. Many Christians will lose their souls even though they call Jesus Lord, are religious, and claim to follow Him. They will miss Heaven simply because they don't really know Him.

In other words, to live as a Christian church member who is not an obedient disciple of Jesus is dangerous and unbiblical. The New Testament does not recognize it. Please don't even consider it.

Perhaps the reason we think there is a saved group of people who are Christians but not disciples is because the requirements of discipleship are strict and demanding. It could be because we read the cost of discipleship and realize we aren't ready or willing to pay it. As a result, people have created the idea that we can be saved and on our way to Heaven without living up to the demands of first-century discipleship. That is a fallacy!

Instead of doing that, we all must become intimately acquainted with the definition of discipleship in Jesus' day and then align our lives with that definition.

Over my years of following Christ, I have met people who actually said that they can't (or won't) be a disciple because they looked at the requirements of discipleship and said, "I can't live up to that, so I guess I'll just have to be a Christian." According to the New Testament, that's not an option. As previously stated, the New Testament has zero examples of Christians who are not disciples of Jesus. If in the New Testament, Christians who aren't disciples DO NOT EXIST, they should not exist today, either!

The True Cost of Discipleship

Let's look at some of Jesus' most challenging teaching on discipleship. Remember that being a Christian who's not a disciple is unbiblical. And if that is true, we must find a way to align our lives with Jesus' requirements of discipleship.

Luke 14:26-33 contains what may be Jesus' most difficult teachings on discipleship. Let's start with verse 26:

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple.

Throughout my life, I've spoken to people who have read this passage and said, "I can't be a disciple because I'm unwilling to hate my family." Have you ever read this verse and thought the same thing? I know I have.

But let me ask you another question. What does the word "hate" mean to you and your culture? In my culture, if somebody hates me, they don't care if I die. In my culture, if somebody hates me, they don't care if I go to hell. In fact, if somebody truly hates me, they would even be willing to participate in killing me if they thought they could get away with it. Is that what "hate" means in your culture?

Well, if that is how you and your culture understand hate, I've got good news for you. That is because your culture and my culture have changed the definition. Jesus was speaking to a strict Jewish culture. The Jews He was addressing were the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These people knew the Old Testament very well. The Jewish people knew that their God was a God of love, yet He Himself had once, when speaking about Jacob and Esau, said, "Jacob I loved but Esau I hated." (Malachi 1:2-3). But God didn't hate Esau the way that we understand hate. He didn't want Esau to die and go to hell. If God had wanted that, He could have made it happen in a split second! No, He simply loved Jacob more than He loved Esau and Jesus' audience knew that.

God said a similar thing when He looked at how Jacob treated his two wives. When He saw that Leah was "hated" (by Jacob), He opened her womb and closed the womb of Rachel (Genesis 29:31). Jacob did not "hate" Leah the way we understand hate. He didn't want her to die and go to hell. Jacob had six children with Leah, and was buried next to Leah. He simply loved Rachel much more than he loved Leah.

That is how His Jewish audience would have understood this teaching, and that is how we need to look at this verse. When Jesus says we must hate our family and our own life, Jesus is not saying that we are supposed to want the worst for them or that we should want them to perish. He is NOT saying we should wish all bad things to happen to them. Not at all. That would be contrary to the nature of God.

God is love! In truth, Jesus is just saying we must love Him much, much more than we love anyone else, including ourselves. We must love Jesus so much that there are no competitors. So much that every other relationship pales in

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comparison to the love we have for Jesus! And when we get to that level, we will be “hating” our family and our own lives in the way that the first-century Jews would have understood this teaching and how Jesus meant it.

Now let's look at verse 27:

And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

In Luke 9:23, He even tells us we must take up our cross DAILY. So what does it mean to take up your cross daily? Is it, “Oh, I've got this neighbor whose dog barks all night. I guess that's just my cross to bear?” Or is it, “I've got these difficult relatives, but they're just my cross to bear?” Or how about, “Oh, my spouse's poor cooking... it's the cross I must bear”? Are these things what Jesus was talking about? NO, they are not.

Remember what a cross was used for. It was an instrument of death. It was used to publicly execute people. The Romans used it to strike fear in the hearts of the people they ruled. Whenever anyone opposed Roman rule or defied them, that person would be publicly executed by being nailed to a cross. Sometimes it took a person up to six days to die.

The people listening to Jesus would have been familiar with the Roman cross. More than likely, everyone listening to Him had seen people being executed on one. And they also would probably have seen those condemned to die carrying their cross on their way to their execution. If you see a person carrying their cross, what do you know about them? You know they are on their way to their execution and about to die, right?

So then, when Jesus is telling His potential disciples that they must carry their cross daily, He is telling them that they must live every day like they are on their way to their execution! Why would Jesus make that a requirement for discipleship?

Think about this: is there a death penalty for criminals where you live? In most cases, places that have the death penalty use one of four methods to end the life of the criminal. They usually conduct the execution by hanging, electric chair, lethal injection, or firing squad. Regardless of the method, in my country, when they take a criminal from their cell on death row and lead them to the place of execution, they call out the phrase, “DEAD MAN WALKING!” Why do you think they say that? Are they just trying to embarrass the person? Or is there a more important reason?

The reason is actually very significant. Guards call out that phrase because the person on their way to their execution has nothing to lose and is very dangerous. Therefore, “DEAD MAN WALKING” warns those nearby that a dangerous person is coming through.

And so it must be with Jesus' disciples. Jesus requires that His disciples live every day like a “Dead Man Walking” on their way to their execution. Only then are we truly dead to ourselves and to the things of this world which makes us very dangerous to the devil! Or think of it this way: if you are living to serve yourself, how can you live to serve Jesus?

Now let's take a look at verse 33. Jesus has already told us that to be His disciples, we must: love Him more than every other person in our life; love Him more than we love ourselves; and live every day as if we are on our way to our execution. In verse 33, He wraps it all up in a final statement that leaves no room to misunderstand His meaning. Look at what He says:

In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

My friends, everything means EVERY THING! He is speaking of possessions, of course, but even more than that, He's saying that we must give up everything that defines us. That means giving up to Jesus your plans, future, hopes and dreams, job, house, car, relationships, bank account and everything else that defines you.

This is not to say that we are to live naked on the street corner, but it is to say that we must view ourselves as managers of the things we have and not as if we own them. If we are truly His disciples, then Jesus holds the highest place in our lives with NO competitors. Every thought, possession, and relationship must be subordinate to Him!

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Oswald Chambers wrote, “Jesus’ one word to his disciples is ‘abandon’—having NO TRACE OF SELF INTEREST.” Does that describe you? Have you abandoned everything for Jesus? Do you live your life with not even a hint of self-interest? I know that is a high calling but it IS the calling of Jesus.

This idea seems foreign to our modern day, independent minds, but it made perfect sense to the people of Jesus’ day. In their culture, they would have understood this teaching as perfectly aligned with what they already knew about discipleship. These ideas were common knowledge in the culture of Jesus. At that time, the rabbi was culturally accepted as the ultimate authority over all areas of a disciple’s life. The rabbi was the most important person in the disciple’s life. Therefore, the people who heard this teaching firsthand would not have struggled with it nearly as much as many modern day Christians. I hope you will not be one of them.

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Chapter 12:

The History of Discipleship

The first time the word “disciple” is found in ancient writings is in the writings of a Greek historian named Herodotus. He first coined the term “disciple” around 400 BC. To Herodotus and the Greeks, a disciple was simply a student of a teacher. To them, a disciple was a learner. The Jews embraced this concept and greatly improved upon it, taking it up several notches. To the Jews, discipleship meant so much more than just gaining knowledge. In fact, they embraced it so much that discipleship was at its all-time high in Israel at the time of Christ. (Are you a Christian or a Disciple by Doctor Ed Gross)

It may surprise you to learn that there were as many as one thousand rabbis walking around Israel at the time of Christ. Each of these rabbis had their own group of disciples following them. Discipleship was so common in the days of Jesus that everyone understood it and everyone knew the rules of discipleship. (David Bivin - *New Light on the Difficult Words of Jesus*)

Consider Football

What’s the most popular sport where you live? For many, it is football—what North Americans call soccer. Do you understand the game? Do you know the rules? If you were asked to play, would you have a pretty good idea of what is going to be expected of you? You likely understand the sport because the game is part of the fabric of your culture. Here’s my point: you didn’t attend school to learn that sport. You grew up in a culture that was permeated with the understanding of that sport. People usually start playing it at a very young age and can’t remember a day when they didn’t understand it.

In Jesus’ day, they didn’t have sports like we have today, but they had discipleship. There were rules to govern the relationship between the rabbis and their disciples just like there are rules to govern sports today. And because discipleship was woven into the fabric of everyday life, the culture taught the rules of discipleship to everyone by default. People in Israel in Jesus’ time learned the rules of discipleship simply because they lived in a culture permeated by discipleship.

When Matthew responded to the invitation of Jesus, he knew exactly what he was agreeing to, even though he hadn’t heard a single word of Jesus’ teaching. He, and all the disciples, understood that if they were going to follow any rabbi, they would need to abide by the established rules that governed that relationship.

Follow Me

The phrase “follow me” was commonly used among the rabbis of Jesus’ day. When a rabbi said “follow me” to someone, it was an all-or-nothing call. The rabbi was imploring the potential disciple to give up their own way of life. They were inviting the disciple to completely embrace the way of life and the teachings of the rabbi. Have you fully embraced the way of life and teachings of Jesus? If not, why not do that today?

Take My Yoke

The phrase “take my yoke upon you” was also commonly used among the rabbis of Jesus’ day. It literally meant to bind yourself to the rabbi and learn from him. But it also meant becoming just like him. This makes more sense to people in agricultural settings.

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A yoke is a wooden farm implement (pictured here) used to attach two strong animals at the neck so they could pull a cart, wagon, or plow. When training a younger, inexperienced ox (i.e. disciple), you would attach the younger, weaker animal to the stronger, more experienced animal. The older, stronger animal was used to train the younger, weaker one to become just like the older, experienced one.

Think of it as literally binding yourself to Jesus. Once you do that, you'll have no choice but to let Him make you just like Himself.

Bondservants

In the culture of Jesus' day, the rabbi was considered the master, and the disciple was considered a voluntary slave or bondservant. This is why disciples would obey their rabbi without question or hesitation. To NOT obey your rabbi would be to sever the relationship and no longer be a disciple of that rabbi.

Paul totally understood this. In 1 Corinthians 6:19b-20a Paul says,

"You are not your own, you were bought at a price."

Do you see how that is master/slave language? The one who bought you is your master. And the one purchased is the slave, servant, or bondservant. This is an entirely voluntary arrangement, and you are free to leave at any moment. But don't even consider that. Remember, He bought you with His blood to save you from eternal destruction in a lake of fire! He is the best master that exists. Never think of leaving Him even if it costs you your temporary life in this world.

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Chapter 13:

Five Characteristics of a Disciple in Jesus' Day

In Jesus' day, the rabbi was considered the lord and master of the disciple. As such, the rabbi exercised complete authority over all areas of the disciple's life. With this in mind, here are the five primary characteristics of a disciple in the days of Jesus.

#1 Obedience without question or hesitation.

At the beginning of this book, we looked at Jesus' encounter with Peter in the boat and the miraculous fish catch. Jesus tells Peter to let down his net, but Peter doesn't want to. The only reason Peter does let down the net is because he knows the rules of discipleship. Peter knew that to disobey his rabbi would be to sever the relationship.

Imagine what would have happened if Peter had said, "No." What if Peter had rowed Jesus back to shore and taken a nap? Would we even know Peter's name today? Maybe not. Peter's relationship with Jesus could have ended right then and there if Peter would have refused to obey.

#2 Memorize all the teachings of your rabbi word-for-word WITHOUT writing anything down.

It was actually illegal (against rabbinical law) for a disciple to write down the teaching of their rabbi. Why do you think the rabbis would make a law that didn't allow the disciples to write down their teaching?

Here's a question that might help clarify the reason for the rule. How much of Jesus' teaching do you have recorded in your Bible? Well, we know what we do have is all we need because it was "breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). So how much of Jesus' teaching have you stored in your mind? Somewhere between 0% and 100%, right?

The only teaching of Jesus we can obey on a daily basis is the teaching we have stored in our minds. I can't obey it if I don't know it! And a great way to demonstrate obedience to others is by living a life of obedience yourself. That's why it was so crucial for first-century disciples to memorize ALL the teachings of their rabbi. That way, they could live their entire life according to his teachings. Notice what Jesus says in John 15:7.

If you remain in me and **my words remain in you**, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

Where does Jesus want His teaching to remain? In You!

This passage was spoken to disciples who, in Jesus' day, were expected to memorize ALL of his teaching. So when He says, "My words remain in you," He is referring to the fact that these disciples had stored all of His teachings (words) in their minds. Have you?

I've had people tell me that this verse isn't true. They say, "I've asked for what I wished for, and I haven't gotten it." Typically I respond by saying, "Maybe He wasn't talking to you." They look at me in stunned silence, and I continue, "These words were spoken to disciples who had memorized ALL of Jesus' teaching. Does that describe you?" And my friend, does it describe you? If not, do the exercise on commands in Appendix A and go over His commands again and again until you know them by heart. God will help you. (David Bivin - *New Light on the Difficult Words of Jesus*)

I can tell you with certainty that once you have memorized all of Jesus' teachings and commands and have committed to obeying them, you will see a much greater percentage of your prayers answered.

#3 Agree with your rabbi's interpretation of the Old Testament.

In the sermon on the mount in Matthew 5, we see Jesus repeatedly use the phrase, "You have heard that it was said...but I tell you...." What He is doing here is a type of debate with the other rabbis and teachers of the law. It's like

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He's saying, "Other teachers have told you this and that, but that's not correct. I am the authority on the Old Testament, so I will tell you what these things mean." Some people don't think this characteristic is important, but it is *essential*. During His sermon on the mount, Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, do not commit adultery, but I tell you that if you even look at a woman with lust in your heart, you have committed adultery with her in your heart."

Now imagine that Thomas comes up to Jesus afterward and says, "That was a good sermon, Jesus, but I disagree with you on that whole lust thing. I'm going to keep looking at pornography, but I'd like to remain your disciple. Okay?" What do you think Jesus would say? He'd say, "NO WAY," right? We must agree with every point that Jesus clarified about the Old Testament if we want to remain in right relationship with Him.

Here's another example, in Matthew 19:4-6, when Jesus answers a question about divorce:

Jesus answered, "Haven't you read the scripture that says that in the beginning the Creator made people male and female? And God said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one.' So they are no longer two, but one. No human being must separate, then, what God has joined together."

Jesus clarified several points here. And if you desire to be His disciple, you do not have the option of disagreeing with Him on any of these things. Here are those points.

The Creator made males and females when He made the world.

The Creator declared that a male would start a new family with a female wife.

Once united, they are considered one unit by the Creator.

The Creator joins them together, and humans must not separate that union.

If you disagree with Jesus on any of these topics, you are not in the right frame of mind to be His disciple. If you disagree with any of these points, your quarrel is with Jesus, so please don't pick a fight with me.

#4 Imitate the actions of your rabbi.

In Matthew 14:22-33, we see the story of Jesus walking on water. Look at what Peter says to Jesus in verse 28:

"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

Do you see the question there? Peter says, "**If it's you...**" Peter isn't sure it's really Jesus. He's never seen Jesus walking on water before. The disciples may wonder if this is a deceiving spirit sent to harm them. But Peter knows the rules of discipleship, so he devises a plan. Peter understands that it is the rabbi's job to equip and empower his disciples to do everything he can do. So Peter says, "If it's really you, then equip and empower me to do what you are doing."

At Jesus' invitation, Peter jumps out of the boat, and the water holds him up. This would have proven to all the disciples that this really was Jesus. The fact that Jesus gave Peter the ability to do exactly what He was doing was the proof that it really was Him.

Don't miss an essential point here. Peter could only imitate Jesus **while** he was focusing on Jesus. Once Peter took his eyes off Jesus and started looking at his circumstances, he immediately sank into the waves (and in these final days of this age, we are going to need to focus on Jesus more than ever before). When you have the opportunity to imitate Jesus in *any* way, make sure you focus on Him and NOT on the circumstances. This is essential! When confronted with a demon, don't focus on the demon; focus on Jesus. When faced with a sickness, don't look at the sickness; look at Jesus, and He will enable you to imitate Him. When confronted with a dead body, don't look at the dead person. Instead, focus on Jesus, who raises the dead.

A few years ago, I spoke at a church service on Easter morning in central Asia. The city was one third Christian, one third Muslim, and one third Hindu. Their custom was to broadcast the messages over loudspeakers to the entire community. So my message was broadcast in the local language to hundreds of Muslims and Hindus.

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I spoke that morning about how Jesus rose from the dead to give us new life and that this new life includes the power to imitate Jesus in this life. I told them this new life includes the power to cast out demons, heal the sick, and raise the dead.

As soon as I finished the closing prayer, I heard a blood-curdling scream about one hundred feet to my left. It was the kind of scream you'd expect to hear from a mother who had just found her two-year-old child dead in their crib. The woman rushed out of her home holding a motionless child. Then her frantic eyes caught mine.

She had just listened to my message about how Jesus will give us the power and authority to heal the sick and raise the dead. She ran straight to me with her arms outstretched with the seemingly lifeless child in her hands.

I immediately knew this was a test from the enemy.

Now, I'm not a doctor, and I didn't have time to check for a pulse, but the child looked dead to me. He was about two years old, and his skin was gray. The child was naked, and when I put my hands on the body, it was cold. The little boy wasn't moving or breathing, and his eyes were rolled back in his head. A group gathered around, and I loudly declared, "I speak life, health, and wholeness to you in the almighty name of Jesus! Amen!" Then they jumped in a vehicle and rushed off to the nearby hospital.

Since it was Easter morning, there was very little traffic, so they arrived at the hospital in just five minutes. I had no idea where the hospital was or how long it would take to get there, so I just knelt down to pray on the stage with my face to the wall. I was not going to move until someone told me the child was alright.

After an hour, someone touched me and said, "Brother, the child is fine and there are others here who would like prayer." So I got up and prayed for the needs of the rest of the group.

That evening I was in my host's home, and his wife was treating me like royalty. I asked her, "Why are you treating me so special?" She said, "Because I am the one who held that baby on the drive to the hospital." She continued, "I saw his life and breath return and felt the warmth flow back into that child. When we arrived at the hospital, he was happy and playing and climbing around in the car, and the doctors could find nothing wrong with the child at all!" All glory to God! All I did was exercise faith in the great healer, Jesus!

On another occasion, just weeks after being trained somewhere in Africa, one of our trainees was getting on a public transit bus when he saw a man being carried and placed on the bus behind his. The man being carried was very ill and was being taken to the hospital. Suddenly our trainee heard a loud wailing. It was the wife of the sick man screaming that her husband had died. In his spirit, the trainee said, "Lord, I will do whatever You ask." The Lord spoke to his spirit and said, "Go to the other bus." So he exited his bus and went to the other one. When he arrived, the scene was frantic. The man's wife was crying and shouting, "He's dead!"

This young disciple-maker asked the man's name. The wife told him (we'll call him Frank). The disciple-maker said, "Frank, you aren't dead. You are alive in Jesus' name. Amen!" And nothing happened. So he repeated it: "Frank, you aren't dead. You are alive in Jesus' name. Amen!" And Frank's wife said, "Amen!"

Frank continued lying there, not moving, not breathing. A third time the disciple-maker said, "Frank, you aren't dead. You are alive in Jesus' name. Amen!" Frank's wife said, "Amen!" Then Frank took a breath and said, "Amen!"

Frank was completely healed from that moment and didn't even need to go to the hospital. He went home rejoicing in the power of God. If you and I keep our focus on Jesus, we can imitate Jesus in any and every circumstance that comes our way.

#5 Gather More Disciples to Your Rabbi.

This was already understood by Jesus' entire culture, so when any of Jesus' disciples began following Him, they would instinctively start looking for others who would make good disciples of their rabbi. This is clearly seen in the first chapter of John. Here we see Jesus' first encounter with some of His disciples. At the beginning of this encounter, Jesus doesn't have any disciples. By the end of the encounter, He has five disciples. Read the passage for yourself, but while you read, pay attention to who tells these disciples to follow Jesus. This is John 1:35-50.

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The next day John (the baptist) was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

"Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).

The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me."

Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.

"Come and see," said Philip.

When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."

"How do you know me?" Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you."

Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel."

Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that."

In this passage, we see Jesus go from zero to five disciples. How many did Jesus personally call to follow Him, and how many became followers of Jesus at someone else's suggestion? First, we have Andrew and the unnamed disciple. They are told to follow Jesus by John the Baptist. That's two.

Then Peter joins the group at the suggestion of his brother Andrew. Now there's three.

Phillip joins the party at the request of Jesus. That makes four. Then Phillip goes and gets Nathanael. So Nathanael begins following Jesus at the suggestion of Phillip. Now there are five.

Jesus gained five disciples, but He only personally called one. The other four came at the suggestion of someone else. If you and I are going to be genuine disciples of Jesus today, we must develop the habit of introducing people to Jesus and helping them become His disciples.

What About You and Your Ministry?

The five characteristics above describe Jesus and His culture's understanding of discipleship. When He said, "Make disciples," this is what He meant.

Do the five characteristics describe you? Are you someone who obeys all of Jesus' commands, memorizes all of Jesus' teachings, agrees with Jesus' interpretation of the Old Testament, imitates the actions of Jesus, and consistently gathers more disciples to Jesus?

If those five characteristics do not describe you, don't worry, you are not alone. They don't describe most Christian pastors or church members today. Don't waste time regretting your past. Instead, why not move into your preferred future as a true disciple and disciple-maker of Jesus Christ?!? You can only start where you are, then commit to walking in authentic, biblical, first-century discipleship for the rest of your days.

It doesn't matter where you are on the road; what matters is which direction you are going. Are you following Jesus and becoming more like Him day by day? Or are you moving away from Him and becoming more like the world each

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day? This is the test of discipleship. We will never fully achieve Christlikeness in this life, but we must be committed to moving one step closer to that goal each and every day.

If you are in leadership in the body of Christ in any way, do these five characteristics describe you and your ministry? What are the people in your ministry becoming? If these five characteristics aren't the goal, then you are falling short in your commitment to obey Jesus Christ and fulfill the Great Commission.

Consider this: If you're not making disciples according to Jesus' definition of a disciple, then you are existing in a state of disobedience to the final command of Christ. If that is the case, you are failing Jesus and the souls He has placed in your care. Please don't allow that in your life or ministry.

Pastors and leaders, setting the tone, pace, and priorities is up to you. Together we must raise the bar back to the height Jesus set it at. It is only possible to lead people to where you are. If you recoil at the prospect of living as a true representative and disciple of Jesus, then don't be surprised if the people you lead will shrink back at the prospect of it too.

I once conducted this training in central India. A few men among the trainees were overly enthusiastic, just nodding and smiling at everything I said. I spoke with them during a tea break, and they shared this: "We are pastors of a congregation in a nearby state. The Holy Spirit has been showing us these same things. On Sunday mornings, we don't attend church anymore. Instead, we unlock the church building so people can go in and worship if they want, but we, as their leaders, go to the marketplace and share the gospel with the lost." The congregation chooses if they are going to share the gospel in the marketplace or go to the church for a worship service. How awesome is that?

This was wonderful to hear, but what blessed me most was that the leaders were setting an example for the believers. Remember, going to a religious meeting on Sunday mornings is NOT a command of Jesus, but preaching the gospel to, and making disciples of, the lost world IS!

If the final command Jesus gave us is to disciple the world, then the primary purpose of the church is to finish the Great Commission. So if we make something less than disciples according to Jesus' definition, we fall short of our divine purpose. We are like blind men randomly shooting arrows, hoping to hit a target. My friends, if we don't know the target Jesus set for us, we will miss it every time!

Should We Be Christians or Disciples? And Why Does it Matter?

Sometimes people say, "What's the big deal? What does it matter if we make Christians or disciples?" It matters because our ability to fulfill the Great Commission demands a proper, first-century understanding of the term "disciple" as Jesus understood it. We have no hope of ever fulfilling the Great Commission if we don't know what Jesus meant when He used that term. Never forget that Jesus said, "MAKE DISCIPLES!" If we don't know what He meant, we will be FAILING Him while we think we are SERVING Him! Lord, help us!

Concerning evangelism, Dr. Ed Gross (author of "Are you a Christian or a Disciple") said, "There are certain things in the Kingdom of God that must not be rushed. And entering it is one of those things."

Luke 14:28 tells us to consider the cost. Yet today we still see well-meaning Christians often rush people into a false commitment by getting them to say the "sinner's prayer." Many of those people don't know what they are getting into, and the vast majority do not end up living as obedient, multiplying disciples of Jesus Christ! In fact, most don't live their lives as Christ-followers at all.

Dr. Gross is also fond of saying, "What you save them through, is what you save them to." In other words, how a person gets saved is how they will think others should get saved. Suppose a person gets saved in a large church service or a crusade. In that case, they will think that's how it's done. They will see it as something they will never be able to personally replicate.

But suppose a person enters into a relationship with Jesus Christ through a friend sharing the gospel or in a small intimate gathering of friends. In that case, they can easily see it as something anyone can do. The simpler something is, the easier it is to replicate.

What About Personal/Door-To-Door Evangelism?

I know a man named Richard who used to be the regional director of an international evangelism ministry. Their organization would knock on doors and share a rushed, high-pressure spiritual sales pitch to get people to “pray the sinner’s prayer.” Then they would have them sign and date the back of a booklet stating that was the day they became a “Christian.” Finally, the people who prayed the prayer were promised eternal security and told that they cannot fall away from Jesus.

Today, Richard clearly sees the New Testament model of obedient disciples making more obedient disciples; he doesn’t operate in that quick, high-pressure way any more. In fact, when he speaks of his days working in that evangelism organization, he openly says, “I think I sent more people to Hell than Heaven by rushing them into praying the ‘sinner’s prayer.’” (Again, where do you see the “sinner’s prayer” in the practices of the New Testament church?) Richard says this because he feels he gave people a false sense of security by rushing them to receive Jesus without first counting the cost of following Him.

I know another man named Jim who used to work in that same door-to-door evangelism ministry. He led more than 1000 people to pray the sinner’s prayer. Jim is an engineer by training and profession, so he had a keen desire to analyze the results of his work. He decided to reach out to ALL 1000 of those who had prayed the sinner’s prayer to see how they were getting along in their faith.

Do you know what he found? He found that NONE (not one) of them was living an active life of faith in Christ! What a wake-up call! Today, Jim works as a disciple-making trainer launching movements of obedient disciples that multiply all over the world! Now his ministry is bearing lasting fruit.

Jesus Never Said:

“Go and get people to pray the sinner’s prayer.” So why do we do that?

“Go make people into Christian church members.” So, why do we prioritize that?

“I have come to start a new religion, called ‘Christianity.’”

The New Testament disciples never called themselves “Christians,” so why do we?

Jesus Came to Do Two Primary Things

Jesus came to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin, offering all people forgiveness of sin and eternal life by receiving Him as Lord and Savior.

He also came to establish His eternal Kingdom through which He will visibly rule the entire Earth from Jerusalem in the not-too-distant future. All of His obedient followers will rule and reign with Him!

He didn’t come to start Christianity. If He had, that would mean He started something that would end when He returned. No, Jesus is about eternal things like our souls and His Kingdom. Therefore, don’t believe that advancing Christianity is the same as advancing the Kingdom of Jesus! They aren’t the same thing. One is temporary, and one is eternal!

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Chapter 14:

Some Truths about the Church in America

This is the situation in the US. (*The American Church in Crisis* By David T Olson) Perhaps there are similarities with your country:

- Only about 15% of US citizens attend church weekly.
- In 49 out of our 50 states, church attendance is in decline.
- Roughly three churches close for every one that opens.
- Half of all churches don't add one person through conversion to Christ per year.
- There are 85 existing church members for every person that comes to Christ each year.
- Only 4% of US churches ever start another church. Half of those are from church splits.
- If you gathered all the lost people in the US into a nation, it would be the fifth largest unreached nation on Earth.

My hope is that we will become a nation of disciple-makers who disciple the nations and continue to multiply until the return of Christ! The time for passive spectator "churchianity" is over! It is time to embrace the cause of Christ in your life and become what Jesus intended. Become an obedient disciple who makes disciples and continues to advance the Kingdom of Jesus until you see HIM face-to-face.

Imagine a Visit to Your Doctor

You complain of chest pain, stomach pain, and a severe headache. The doctor runs some tests and finds you have congestive heart failure, stomach cancer, and an inoperable brain tumor. He estimates that you have only a few months to live. But when you return for your follow-up visit, he tells you everything is fine, there is nothing to worry about, and you should just take a pain reliever for any discomfort.

Imagine the doctor lies to you because he doesn't want to be disliked. He doesn't want to upset you or hurt your feelings. How would you feel when you learned the truth? What would you think about that doctor? You'd think he's terrible and should lose his medical license...right?

So in the interest of honesty, no matter who it may upset, I am going to share some of the nitty-gritty truth about the building-based church system in the United States. It isn't a pretty picture, so if you'd rather not know these things, skip to the next page. I'm doing this because I'm diagnosing the health of the system that you may be a part of.

More Truth about the Traditional Church System in the United States

- Up to 35% of clergy are addicted to pornography.
- Congregants tend to become passive spectators instead of active participants in advancing the Kingdom of Jesus.
- Church members are taught to obey the traditions of men rather than the commands of Jesus Christ: give money, attend services, and volunteer, and you can be a member. But "preach the gospel," "love your enemies," "turn the other cheek," and "make disciples" are treated as optional.
- The average Christian in America gives around 2% of their income to charities. This is the same as the lost world.
- Over \$5,000,000 is stolen every day by trusted church treasurers! This is more than the US-based church gives to reaching the lost, more than is given to missions.
- More than one billion USD is paid out by church insurance companies in annual sex-abuse settlements.
- 95% of church income is spent on buildings, staff, and programs, while less than .1% is spent to reach the most unreached peoples on Earth who have never heard Jesus' name even once. (The Western way of doing church is very expensive and we have exported it to the world as THE way. Much of the world struggles under that burden.)
- Just one person gets baptized for every \$1.5 million collected in church offerings! It is a mathematical impossibility to disciple the world at that cost! In contrast, it costs almost nothing the DMM/1st Century way.

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- Nearly 70% of evangelical Christians are unaware of the (roughly) 2 billion totally unreached people on Earth today.
- 90% of Christian Church members never share the gospel with anyone in their entire lifetime!
- 95% of Christian church members never lead one person to Christ!
- The US Church system is one of acquired knowledge without action. It tends to view maturity in terms of accumulated knowledge. The Bible views maturity in terms of obedience!
- The divide between clergy and laity keeps many in perpetual infancy. (Ephesians 4:11-14) The leaders are supposed to equip the saints to DO ministry, so they don't remain infants. But that is essentially NOT happening in the US church!
- People are leaving the building-based church system in mass numbers. (I personally feel this is good news because the building-based church system does not make true disciples of Jesus anyway.)

I'm sorry to have been the one to tell you all that. My purpose is not to cause harm or insult anyone. This is simply a reality check. Compare the above with the NT church and ask yourself, "Is this what Jesus had in mind when He said, 'I will build My church?'" Is it possible Jesus had something better in mind when He made that statement?

May we never settle for anything less than the true *ekklesia* of Jesus Christ!

Endless Possibilities

Once upon a time, two shoe salesmen were sent to Africa to try and open up the African shoe market. They each observed the situation and sent a telegram to their home office. The first salesman's telegram said, "Send me a ticket to come home. The people here don't wear shoes." The second salesman's telegram said, "Send me all the shoes you have! The people here don't wear shoes!"

See the difference? Both men saw the same situation, but they interpreted it completely differently. One was defeated before he started, and the other saw only endless potential. When I realize that only a tiny percentage of the world's population today would be considered disciples according to Jesus' definition, I SEE ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES!

Which one of the two salesmen do you more closely identify with? If you resonate with the one who saw only endless potential, then you are the kind of person Jesus is looking for to help disciple the world. If you feel defeated and overwhelmed before you even start, ask Jesus to change your perspective and make you into the disciple-maker He desires you to be.

Even though many people are leaving the building-based religious system, there is still hope! Jesus didn't start that system anyway, and He didn't mandate that we operate in it. It is actually easier to disciple people who are outside religious systems than it is to disciple those inside. For many years, those who attend church have been trying to get those who don't attend church services to come to their meetings. But that hasn't worked very well. In fact, the number of people attending church keeps decreasing.

What We Should Be Doing

Instead of the 15% of church-goers pressuring the 85% who don't, we should be training, equipping, and sending the 15% to GO to the 85% and disciple them right where they find them! The church needs to learn to disciple them out in the world where they find them. That is what Kingdom expansion looks like. Don't invite them to your meeting! Nobody did that in the New Testament church! Instead, they started another fellowship in their home among their friends and family. THAT is the pattern we see in the New Testament church!

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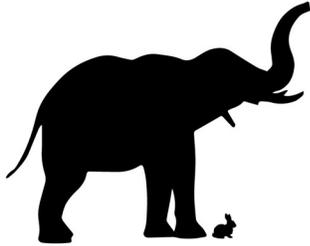
Kurt Olson president of *Go Multiply*

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Chapter 15:

Two Forms of Church in the World

Elephants vs Rabbits



Let's use elephants as a metaphor for the typical US church today. A female elephant doesn't become sexually mature (able to reproduce) until she is 18 years old, and she can only get pregnant at four specific times a year! Once she does get pregnant, she has a 22-month gestation period and has only one baby per pregnancy. The time it takes from an elephant's birth to birthing a baby of their own is 22 years! Elephants are also large, slow, and difficult to hide. In the same way, the building-based church system multiplies very slowly. And because it is big, it is an easy target in times of

persecution.

This building-based form of church has pastors, parking lots, pulpits, and many programs. It is costly. It almost never makes disciples. And it is NOT found on the pages of the New Testament! Leaders often tell me, "It's biblical, brother." But when I ask them to show me where, they can't find any passages. If you know of passages that show it in the New Testament, please send them to me.

On the other hand, people refer to the smaller New Testament system as "rabbit" church because it is small, hides easily, and multiplies rapidly! Rabbits are almost continuously fertile. They reach sexual maturity in just four months, they have an average of seven babies per pregnancy and are only pregnant for one month! Therefore, in just three years, two rabbits could multiply to 476,000,000. You read that right! That's four hundred seventy-six million!

The rabbit church is small and can meet anywhere. It IS the form of church that we see in the New Testament! The rabbit form of church has the best chance of making true disciples and finishing the Great Commission because it multiplies rapidly.

Which of these two systems do you think is capable of finishing the Great Commission?

The Math by 5's

Average households worldwide have five members, so if you think of multiplying by five, you could disciple the entire world in your lifetime! And remember that groups of disciples continue to birth more groups year after year. The math looks something like this:

One group of five starts five more groups with 5 new people in a year. That's now 25 new disciples, plus the original five, for a total of 30. The following year, those 30 each start another group, so you end up with 150 new disciples plus the original 30, for a total of 180 disciples. Year three starts with 180 disciples, each starting one group for a total of 900 new disciples (plus the original 180) for a total of 1080 disciples in just three years! If this multiplication continues, one group could multiply to over 1 million disciples by the seventh year.

Do you see the potential of multiplying disciples in homes to finish the Great Commission? The rabbit church also persecution-proofs the church by decentralizing the leadership and making true disciples.

Mathematically, the rabbit church system is the only system capable of finishing the Great Commission because the elephant system is too expensive, grows too slowly, and doesn't actually make disciples.

The Derg and the Red Wave

Note: If you are unfamiliar with the Derg or the Red Wave that accompanied it, you can read more about it by looking it up on Wikipedia.

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In 1974, a communist government took control of Ethiopia. At that time, missionaries had been in the country trying to establish Christianity for many years. One denomination had been erecting church buildings, starting seminaries, training pastors, and gathering people into their buildings for about a hundred years. In that time, they managed to grow to about 4,000 members. But when the Communist government took power, they killed all the pastors (the Red Wave refers to the wave of blood spilled at the onset of the Derg). They imprisoned the elders. They burned the church buildings and confiscated the seminaries.

What was the rest of the church supposed to do? They had suddenly lost their elders, pastors, and church buildings. But they hadn't lost each other or the Word of God. So they decided to go underground and meet in their homes. They chose to read the Bible, worship the Lord, and help each other live as obedient followers of Jesus.

Remember that after 100 years of erecting buildings, training clergy in seminaries, and inviting people to church meetings, they'd only grown to around 4,000 people. That is an average of only 40 people per year. But during the Derg, after only ten years underground without seminaries, professional clergy, church buildings, or Sunday morning services, they multiplied from about 4,000 to more than 40,000!

When they were forced to switch from the Elephant model to the Rabbit model, they multiplied more than ten times in a tenth the time! This is the incredible power of the New Testament rabbit church system.

One wise guy jokingly said, "So I guess we should just get rid of all our pastors, church buildings, and seminaries then." Everyone laughed, but this isn't a laughing matter. The eternal destiny of millions of souls hangs in the balance. If we are going to have buildings, they should be used as equipping/training centers that make and send disciples to reach the world!

I'm sure you'll agree that we see the most significant results when we utilize the most efficient and effective operating system. It turns out that the building-based system is NOT the most effective nor efficient way to expand the Kingdom of Jesus!

Now, I'm not suggesting that we eliminate all church buildings, seminaries, and professional clergy. What I'd like to ask is, "Are those things part of the New Testament church system that you see in the Bible?" No, they are not. But instead of eliminating our buildings, let's turn them into equipping centers that make disciples that multiply to the ends of the Earth. And let's turn the clergy into disciple-makers who train and send obedient disciples to disciple all nations.

Paul Uses a Building

Look at how the Apostle Paul utilized a building in Acts 19:9b-10:

He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

Paul was meeting daily in a lecture hall but every person in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord? How is that possible? Historians tell us that there may have been as many as 8.5 million people in the province of Asia at the time. The only way it's possible to reach that many people in two years is if the building was being used to train and send disciples who also trained and sent others. This is how we should be using our buildings!

Are Pastors Trained to Make Disciples?

Over the last decade, I've asked hundreds of pastors if they learned how to make disciples that multiply during their training or in seminary. As of this writing, NOT ONE has answered "yes" to that question. Instead, they are simply trained to run a religious organization, not to be or to make disciples.

If the primary purpose of the church is to disciple the nations and the leaders of the church are not being trained to do that, then there is a huge knowledge gap in the church's ability to finish the Great Commission!

IF WE ARE GOING TO SEE THE GREAT COMMISSION FINISHED, WE DESPERATELY NEED A NEW OPERATING SYSTEM!

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WE NEED TO REDISCOVER THE ORIGINAL, NEW WINESKIN, OPERATING SYSTEM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH!

And just to be clear, I am NOT speaking of the synagogue system of Jesus' day. I'm talking about the way the followers of Christ functioned in their obedience to Jesus' command to disciple all nations! The synagogue system was never commanded by God either. It may have been something the people of Israel brought back from their exile in Babylon.

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Chapter 16:

Where Did the Building-Based Church System Come From?

Many people wonder how we ended up with the building-based church system that we have today. Here's what happened. For about the first 300 years after Jesus' death and resurrection, the church was persecuted and in hiding. They primarily met in small groups in homes.

In fact, very significant spiritual events took place in homes. Take a look at these biblical examples of the significant happenings in ordinary houses (some text is printed in bold for emphasis):

Matthew 2:11

On coming to the **house**, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

The wise men worshiped Jesus in a house. If it was ok for them, then it's probably ok for us to worship Jesus in a home as well.

Matthew 8:14-16

When Jesus came into Peter's **house**, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.

When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick.

The ministries of healing and deliverance were happening in Peter's house. And these things still take place in homes today. I was once part of casting a demon out of a guy in a house in Uganda.

Matthew 26:18

He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'"

Here we see Jesus presiding over the first communion service... in a house. Is there any reason communion can't be celebrated in homes today? Of course not. Try it yourself.

The whole story is found in Mark 2:1-12 (here are verses 1 & 11)

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home...

"I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."

Jesus' house in Capernaum (see Matt. 4:13) seems to be a location where a healing took place.

Acts 2:1-2

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

The Holy Spirit was first poured out, not in the temple, not in a synagogue, but in a house where 120 followers of Jesus were gathered! Many people see Pentecost as God's official launch of the church. If that's true, it means God chose to launch His church in a house. And, if God poured out His Spirit in a house 2000 years ago, and God doesn't change, is there any reason that He would not pour out His Spirit in a home today? Of course not!

Acts 2:46

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,

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It was the common practice of the early church to gather in their homes for meals, fellowship, and communion. Where do people gather where you live? This might resemble gathering in the middle of your market or shopping center. Acts 20:20 says, “publicly and from house to house.” THAT is how the early church operated!

And in regards to the early church meeting in the temple courts, it is not the same as “going to church” today. The early disciples didn’t own the temple. They were not in charge of it. It was not a sanctuary (safe place) for the early church; it was a public place where most people who went were not followers of Christ.

The apostles of Jesus were actually inside the temple, declaring that those in charge of the temple had executed the Messiah. This was NOT a popular message, which is why they were in danger of being persecuted, arrested, or even killed there.

Acts 5:42

Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

Again we see the people of God both teaching [obedience to the commands of Christ] and proclaiming the gospel, which is the way of salvation. Teaching is primarily done to saved people, and proclaiming the gospel is done mainly to those who have not yet surrendered their lives to the Lordship of Christ. Both of these took place in homes.

Acts 8:3

But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.

When persecution broke out against the church, where did the persecutors go to find and destroy the church? They went to houses. The people had fled from the public space of the temple and now had gone underground into the most natural place, their homes.

Acts 10:24-25 & 44

The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence...

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.

In Acts 2:1-2, at Pentecost, we saw God launch the church among the Jews in a house. Here we see Him launch the church among the gentiles in the same way. The Holy Spirit falls on everyone in the house of Cornelius.

Acts 16:15

When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.

This is the conversion of Lydia and the beginning of the church at Philippi. Notice the emphasis on the house and household. So, if you want to establish the church of Jesus and launch a movement of followers of Christ in a particular city, ask God to reveal to you a household from which you can start.

Acts 16:31-34

They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

In this passage, Paul and Silas are still being used by God to launch the church at Philippi. And notice how God is doing it: He is using a second household. They preached to everyone IN THE HOUSE. They baptized ALL the members of the household. They ate a meal together IN THE HOUSE. And everyone IN THE HOUSE was filled with joy because they had come to believe in God.

Acts 16:40

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After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.

What was the first thing they did when they got out of prison? They went straight to the house of Lydia. Why did they go there? Because that is where they expected the "church" to be gathered.

Acts 17:5-7

But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus."

Here we see persecution from the Jews toward the budding church in Thessalonica. Notice where they go in search of Paul and Silas: to Jason's house. Thankfully Paul and Silas weren't there, but pay attention to what they did find. They found "Jason and some other believers" gathered together in his home.

Acts 20:20

You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.

This is how Paul describes his mode of operation. Paul taught about Jesus in public and in homes. There is no mention of Paul ever working in church buildings.

Acts 28:30-31

For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!

In this passage, Paul is in Rome awaiting trial. It was like being on house arrest. So how does he choose to spend his time? He rents a house and turns it into a teaching and equipping center. May God do the same thing with your home and with mine.

Romans 16:5a

Greet also the church (ekklesia) that meets at their house.

Paul is saying to greet the followers of Christ that regularly meet in someone's home. In this case, it is the home of a couple named Priscilla and Aquila. And don't miss that Paul calls that gathering in the house "church."

Romans 16:10-11

Greet Apelles, whose fidelity to Christ has stood the test.

Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus.

Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew.

Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

Here we see two separate gatherings of believers that meet in homes. So the understanding seems to be that the believers gathering in a house constitute the "church" in that house.

1 Corinthians 1:11

My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household, have informed me that there are quarrels among you.

The group of believers mentioned here is part of a household.

1 Corinthians 16:15a

You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia,

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Once again, God began the church in a new place, Achaia, by winning a household.

My friends, THIS IS the New Testament model! This is How Jesus did it, AND it's how He trained His followers to do it.

1 Corinthians 16:19

The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house.

Here we see the believers that gather in one home, greeting the believers in Corinth. Again, where is the church meeting? The gathering is taking place in a house.

Philippians 4:22

All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

There was even a gathering of God's people (i.e., church) of the household of Caesar! (I doubt very much that Caesar knew about that!)

Colossians 4:15

Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

Once again, and in a new city, we see a church meeting in a home. This isn't just a coincidence. This is the primary pattern of the early church.

Philemon 1:2

also to Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier—and to the church that meets in your home.

Here we see a couple hosting a gathering of believers (church) in their home.

Remember, Jesus is the one who said, "I will build my church." Now that you've seen these passages let me ask, "How and where does He build it?" He builds it in a house! It seems like He primarily utilized households to launch His church. In fact, homes are the only place that the New Testament specifically says the church met.

Now, take a minute and consider all the examples you have just seen. There are no examples of the church meeting in buildings presided over by a religious professional anywhere in the New Testament. Yes, we see the disciples of Jesus going to synagogues occasionally, but that was almost always a hostile environment. More often than not, they were rejected and thrown out of the synagogue. The reason they were there in the first place was to try and win Jews to Jesus. The first century church never built or owned a synagogue. So why do we think we are supposed to build and meet in church buildings today?

Religious Freedom Gave Us Freedom To Deviate

The building-based church system began under Emperor Constantine around 324 AD. Constantine claimed to become a Christian and decided to create a religion. Since the true disciples had been meeting in secret in their homes, he couldn't get much information from them on how to run a religion. So, Constantine looked around at the pagan religions of Rome and repackaged and rebranded everything with "Christian" labels and meanings.

He basically said, "They have pagan temples, so we will have Christian temples. The pagans have altars with sacrifices on them, so we will have an altar with the body and blood of Jesus on it. The pagans have priests to run the religion, so we'll have Christian priests to run our religion (this is where Catholic priests originated). The pagan religions have special schools to teach the priests how to run their religion, so we'll have schools to teach our priests how to run Christianity (the origin of seminaries and bible schools). The pagan priests wear special clothes, so the Christian priests will need special clothes." (*Pagan Christianity* by George Barna and Frank Viola) On and on it went. The Emperor even relabeled the pagan statues of Rome with new names like Peter, Paul, John, and Mary and baby Jesus.

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This may be difficult for you to receive. Still, the truth is that almost all of the traditions and practices of the building-based church system originate NOT in the methods of the New Testament church but in the pagan religions of Rome at the time of Constantine.

The Protestant movement changed very little in the way of these practices. They changed the title of priest to pastor, and they replaced the Sunday morning catholic Eucharist (communion) service with the Sunday morning sermon. Sure, they reformed the theology, and that was vitally important. Still, they did almost nothing to reform the church's practices to get back to the powerful simplicity of the New Testament church.

They left that task for you and me! WILL YOU ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE?

Let's Talk Traditions

Do you celebrate birthdays or Christmas? Most people do. And if you observe these things, how do you celebrate? Are there gifts? Is there special food? Are there designated drinks? What about a cake? Decorations? Singing? As I mention this list, you are probably picturing your traditional way of celebrating Christmas and birthdays. The reason you can envision the way you celebrate is because that is **your tradition**. You know what to expect because you do roughly the same thing every year.

Is it wrong, sinful, or evil to observe these traditions? Of course not. But what if you began celebrating Christmas every week? Then it would become wrong because it would distract you from your purpose for living, wouldn't it? Your entire life would be consumed with planning the next celebration. It would be a complete waste of God's resources.

Yet, all too often, that is how the traditional church operates. Many even refer to the weekly gathering as the "weekly celebration." So much time and energy is spent on the weekly tradition that there is little time, money, or energy left to make disciples or to reach the lost. Look at what Jesus said about traditions in Matthew 15:3.

Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?"

If Jesus came into most of our traditional building-based churches today, I think He'd say the same thing. In the traditional, Constantinian, elephant system, people only need to attend, give money, and volunteer somewhere. If they do those things, they are considered good church members.

But Jesus commanded us to preach the gospel, make disciples, love our enemies, and turn the other cheek—just to name a few. It's sad to realize a person doesn't have to obey Jesus to be a member in good standing in most traditional churches today. This is the sad reality even though the above commands are direct orders from the Creator of the Universe!

The reason for this is that our religious system is largely upside down today. Just ponder this thought for a minute: in the traditional church system, the commands of Jesus are treated as optional, while the traditions of man-made religion are treated as mandatory. Ask yourself, especially if you are in church leadership, "Am I content to continue operating at a lower level than the level Jesus demands—the level of making obedient disciples?" I hope your answer is NO. Otherwise, how are you going to explain this to Jesus when you meet Him?

I once finished a three-day training on a Thursday somewhere in India. The following day was Good Friday. After a good night's sleep, I woke up and asked my host what he had planned for that day. He said, "We have two options. We can attend a local Good Friday service at my church or we can drive to the end of the road, hike over a mountain, and share the gospel with a village that has never heard the name of Jesus." What do you think we did?

You guessed it. We went to preach the gospel to the unreached village. We did it again the next day, and an entire village became followers of Christ. Praise the Lord! We made that decision because attending a Good Friday service is a tradition of men, and preaching the gospel to the lost is a command of Christ. When faced with those options, a disciple should always choose obedience to Jesus.

What About Your Country?

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Do you think a multiplying movement of obedient disciples can flourish in your country? When Jesus told us to make disciples of “all nations,” did that include yours? Of course it did! Jesus doesn’t exclude any. You can rest assured that if Jesus told you to do it, and all authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given to Him and that He will never leave you or forsake you, then He will equip you, outfit you, empower you, and resource you to do what He has called you to do in the way He has called you to do it. And if you are a disciple of Christ, your job will primarily be to make more disciples of Jesus.

The Way to Finish the Great Commission

Covering everything in prayer, we must learn to be disciples who make disciples and consistently start more groups of disciples (i.e. New Testament rabbit churches.) Then we simply teach, train, empower, and encourage everyone in those churches to do the same.

Think of it this way; if we focus on making church, we never make disciples, but if we focus on making disciples, we will always get Jesus’ church. So, what are you trying to make? Church or disciples?

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Chapter 17:

Two Ways to Learn from God

I suggest two ways to learn from God in a Discovery Bible Study (DBS) manner.

Personal 3-column DBS

Group DBS

Personal (3-Column) Discovery Bible Study

Below is an example of a completed 3-column bible study followed by instructions on how to do one alone or in a group.

3-Column DBS instructions:

In the left column, write the passage exactly as it's written in your Bible. This helps you commit it to memory.

In the center column, write the passage in your own words, just like you'd say it in natural conversation. This prepares you to share (preach) it with others.

At the top of the right column, write down how you will obey, apply, or put into practice the passage you are studying. Remember that disciples obey and help others to obey.

Then at the bottom of the third column, write down with whom you'll share what you just learned from the passage and when you will tell them. This encourages natural sharing and prepares you for preaching the gospel.

The bulk of the Great Commission is about teaching obedience and preaching the good news. Most Christians aren't in the habit of doing either one. It is only possible to be a true disciple of Jesus by developing Great Commission habits, and the DBS process helps to do just that.

In the space provided below (or in a notebook if you prefer), fill out the entire 3-column worksheet using John 6:44-45.

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me.

Copy it word for word, then rewrite it in your own words, then write how you will obey it or apply it to your life, and lastly, write down the name of an actual person you will tell and when you will tell them. It's ok to blame me and say, "My discipleship coach gave me an assignment, and I have to tell someone. Can I tell you?" Most people will say, "Sure."

What I want you to see in the above verse is that the Father is the One who pulls people to Jesus, Jesus raises us from the dead, God the Father will teach us personally, and EVERY SINGLE PERSON who learns from God the Father will come to Jesus! That's a 100% success rate! You can't do better than that. No human teacher comes close!

I have a friend named Ted, and one day a few years ago, he stopped to talk to me on the street. He said, "Holy Spirit said something to me last night. Want to know what it was?" "Of course," I replied. Ted then shared that the Holy Spirit had told him, "Obedience is primarily about your habits."

That resonated with me because it helped me see that the reason most Christian church members don't obey Jesus is simply because they aren't in the habit of obeying Him. This is because our current religious systems don't really emphasize obedience. We all have a set of spiritual habits, but how many of those habits are found among the commands of Christ? One of the greatest things about the DBS process is that it helps people develop the habits of obedient disciples.

The Second Way to Learn from God

“Train yourself to be godly.” The apostle Paul said those words to Timothy even though Timothy was already engaged in ministry (1 Timothy 4:7). This shows that Paul knew people will never be fully conformed into the image of Christ! Timothy needed to continually strive toward godliness, and so do we. Take a moment and ask yourself, “Am I training myself to be godly?” We all could use some improvement in this area; you and I will never get to a level where we couldn’t become a little more godly.

The DBS group process is a great way to grow in godliness. It helps shape our spiritual habits to become like the first-century disciples who turned the world upside down.

Group Discovery Bible Study (suggested Scriptures in Appendix B)

Each time you meet, allow everyone to answer each of these questions (but don’t force anyone to answer). Plan on about 15 minutes per person.

What are you thankful for today?

What are you concerned about today?

How can we help with these concerns?

How did your sharing and obedience go?” (applies to Week 2 and every following week)

Read passage at least 2x (second time everyone closes eyes and just listens)

Have one person retell passage in their own words (group fill in any details)

What stood out to you? Why?

What does this passage teach us about God?

What does this passage teach us about people (ourselves)?

How will you specifically obey this passage? (must be measurable)

Who will you tell and when? (name a real person and time)

Who do you know in need? And how can we help them?

When and where would you like to meet again?

Only Two Rules:

Only discuss the Scripture being studied today (or others you’ve studied together as a group). NO stories and NO other Scriptures! This maintains a level playing field.

If someone introduces anything other than what is found in the verse, ask, “Where do you see that in this passage?” This question keeps false teaching and heresies out of the groups.

Now take some time and do a group DBS on Luke 10:1-11 with 1-3 others. (If you don’t have people you can do a DBS with, then write down all your answers to questions 1-13 on a separate piece of paper.)

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

“When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

“When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.’

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Now, go through the passage again, and write down all the commands of Christ found in this passage. And tell God that with His help, you WILL obey them.

Look at Acts 13:50b-51a.

They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them.

Isn't it interesting that Paul did the same thing? Where do you think he learned that? From Jesus, of course. If you were Jesus, would you train Paul to operate the same way as the other apostles? Or would you train Paul to work differently than how you taught your other apostles? Of course you'd train them to operate the same way. Can you imagine the confusion that would result if you trained Paul to operate differently than the other apostles?

Isaiah and Ester Go to Jinja

After my first DMM training in Uganda, I received a video call from a couple of disciple-makers named Isaiah and Ester, who were very excited. They had learned the training of Jesus found in Luke 10:1-11, and they committed to obey it. Then they watched the Lord move.

Ester felt the Lord was telling them to go to Jinja, a city a few hours away. She shared this with Isaiah. Isaiah replied, "We don't have any money. We can't go to Jinja." Ester replied, "If the Lord is sending us to Jinja, He will provide everything we need. We simply need to obey." Isaiah relented, so they began walking to the bus station even though they didn't even have money for a bus ticket. On the way to the bus station, a friend of theirs met them and said, "I was coming to see you because I have some money that I feel the Lord wants me to give you." They accepted the money which was just enough to buy one-way tickets to Jinja and maybe one meal once they arrived.

Now, the buses don't run on a schedule in this part of Africa. They run once there are enough people to fill the bus. Therefore, Isaiah and Ester had to wait for hours for the bus to leave. At one point, Isaiah got off the bus to use the restroom and caught his shirt on the back of the seat. ALL the buttons popped off his shirt. He picked up the buttons and was a little embarrassed because he didn't bring any extra clothes (obeying Jesus' command from Luke 10 to take no travelers bag). Isaiah and Ester's concern grew because instead of being able to pay for a meal when they arrived, they would have to find a tailor and pay to repair Isaiah's shirt.

After several hours of waiting, the sun started to set. So Isaiah asked the bus company to drive them to Jinja or refund their money. Near sunset, the bus (think large minivan) finally left for Jinja.

They arrived in Jinja well after dark, and most tailors were closed. They asked around and found one that was still open. When they asked him what he would charge to sew the buttons back on, he gave such a low price that Isaiah cried out, "Praise God!"

The tailor immediately took notice and said, "You know God?" Isaiah and Ester replied, "Yes, we know God. In fact, God sent us here to find someone who is looking for God," to which the tailor exclaimed, "I'm looking for God!" Then he asked, "Where are you staying?" The disciple-makers said, "We don't have a place."

The tailor responded, "Now you do. You will stay with me and my family." So Isaiah and Ester went into his home and shared the gospel with the tailor and his family. He and his entire household surrendered their lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ!

The next day they went to the open air market and began sharing the gospel with the people they met there. At first, the people were not receptive to the message of the gospel, and they began to ridicule these disciple-makers.

Isaiah and Ester were about to wipe the dust off their feet and leave the city when the Holy Spirit reminded Ester of something—Jesus had told His followers to "heal the sick who are there." So they shifted gears and asked the group if there were any sick people among them. The sick people came forward, and Isaiah and Ester began to lay their hands on them and pray for them. As you might expect, the Lord healed the people who came forward.

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When the local people saw these healings taking place, someone in the crowd said, "There is a woman in town who lost the ability to walk and speak about four months ago. The doctors can't figure out what's wrong with her. Can your Jesus heal her?" The disciple-makers responded, "Of course He can. Where is she?"

The townspeople escorted our disciple-makers to the home of this lame and mute woman. Isaiah and Ester laid their hands on her and told her to both walk and speak in the almighty name of Jesus. Then they took her by the hand, helped her to her feet, and the first word that woman finally said after four months was "Ester." She then began walking through the town, telling people, "Jesus healed me." Since she was well-known and well-liked throughout Jinja, the whole town wanted to learn about Jesus.

This is how a multiplying movement of disciples began in Jinja, Uganda.

A few years later, one of our leaders from Kenya needed to travel to Jinja to meet with the leaders of the network of disciples there. He told me that they had multiplied to more than 2000 disciples of Jesus by that time. Glory to God!

Now go through Luke 10:1-11 one more time and write down all the characteristics of a person of peace. In other words, what is a person of peace like? What do you know about them?

It is absolutely essential that you understand the type of person you are looking for because, if you don't find a person of peace, then you don't establish any work there. **In DMM, you find a person of peace or move on.** Do not try to force it.

How Important is Obedience?

Let's look at four passages highlighting the difference between two types of religious people. There are those who hear the Word of God and obey it and those who hear the Word but do not obey it. After reading these passages I'd like you to try and determine, which one are you?

Matthew 7:24-27

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

In this passage, we read that a person who hears Jesus' teaching AND applies it to their life is a wise person with a strong foundation. The person who heard Jesus' teaching but did not apply it to their life is a fool with no foundation to their life—when hardships come, their life will collapse around them.

John 14:23-24

Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me."

This passage tells us that obedience proves our love for God. Then it promises that Jesus and His Father will live with us if only we obey Jesus! In contrast, the person who won't obey Jesus is proving that they don't really love Him.

James 1:22-25

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

James begins by saying that people who listen to the Word of God but don't put it into practice are self-deceived. He then finishes this passage by telling us that God will bless us if we DO what we have heard.

1 John 2:3-6

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We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

In this passage we are told that the person who obeys Jesus' commands has the assurance of salvation, and love for God is made complete in them. But the person who claims to know Jesus but doesn't obey Him is a liar without the truth and with no assurance of salvation. Wow!

Notice also that John mentions two characteristics of being a disciple: obedience and imitation. These are clearly tied to assurance of salvation. Two times it says, "**we know**". If you want to KNOW that you are saved, make sure you obey and imitate Jesus! Andrew Murray said, "You get saved by grace but you STAY saved through obedience."

Note that every person mentioned in this passage HEARS the word of God. The difference between the two groups is that one group OBEYS the Word of God, and the other group does not! The contrast between the two groups couldn't be greater!

Here is the Difference

If you take in the Word of God (hear it or read it) **and put it into practice in your life**, the above four passages promise what your life will be like. They say...

You will be wise and the love of God (and God's love for others) will be made complete in you.

You'll be blessed by God in what you do.

You will have the Father and Son (the Creators of the Universe!) come and make their home in your life!

You will have a solid foundation for life.

You will have assurance of salvation!

Wow!! A follower of Jesus would be a fool not to want that to describe their life! Now, contrast all this with what the Bible promises life will be like for the person who takes in the Word of God but does NOT obey it, does not apply it to their life and does not put it into practice.

They will become a lying, unloving, self-deceived fool, with no foundation for life and no assurance of salvation!

No one in their right mind would want that to describe them. Yet this is the sad state of millions of Christians today. They are in this terrible condition and they don't even know it.

So, which one are you? Do you take in the Word of God AND put it into practice? Or do you think that simply taking in the Word of God is good enough? Before we move on, let's double-check: Is this really what the Bible says? Or is Kurt manipulating the text to make it say something that it doesn't really say? Please don't take my word for this, but examine the Word for yourself!

These passages reveal the critical nature of obedience to the Word of God in the lives of His followers. Every follower of Jesus must strive to be obedient to ALL the commands of Christ. It is also critical that we, as leaders, emphasize, practice, and expect obedience in our own lives and in the lives of those we lead. If we don't, the people we lead will become the very lying, unloving, self-deceived fools we **don't** want them to become.

And when a person is self-deceived, who deceived them? That's right...they deceived themselves! It didn't come from the outside. It did not come from the devil or other people. It was internal.

And what is the deception? Isn't it thinking you're in right relationship with God when you are not? Isn't it fooling yourself by thinking, "I go to church and hear good sermons. I give a little money and sing some songs. I'm a good person, so I'm probably ok with God and on my way to Heaven." NO, YOU'RE NOT! YOU'RE SELF-DECEIVED! If you think those things, you may already be the lying, unloving, self-deceived fool described in the above passages. Please don't let this describe you. These self-deceived fools are not bound for Heaven. I'm sorry to say it, but they

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are lost, unsaved Christians on their way to eternity in the lake of fire! These are the people Jesus was talking about in Matthew 7:23 when He said,

Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

Please examine yourself and don't let yourself be a Christian who misses Heaven because you exist in self-deceived disobedience! Instead, let's train ourselves to be godly, and learn to live in obedience to Jesus Christ!

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Chapter 18:

Biggest Pitfalls to Growth

One thing that hinders the launching of DMMs more than anything else is trying to start with Christian church members who are NOT in the habit of sharing or obeying the Scriptures. You see, most Christian church members already have a set of spiritual practices, and sadly, sharing the gospel, making disciples, and obeying all the commands of Jesus are not on the list.

It is easier to start a multiplying movement of disciples of Jesus with lost people than with existing Christians. Lost people have no spiritual habits and thus develop Great Commission habits more easily. For existing Christian church members, it's more difficult because they have to sort through their current spiritual habits and decide which ones to keep and which ones to dispose of.

Another reason it is easier to launch movements with lost people is that the lost person's closest relationships are mostly with other lost people. The longer a person is a Christian, their closest relationships become more and more with other Christians and less and less with lost people. So natural sharing is ineffective because the sharing is done to other Christians who, all too often, aren't in the habit of sharing or obeying the Word of God.

One of the reasons that the Jesus Movement of the '60s and '70s spread so rapidly was because the hippies naturally shared what they were learning with their friends, other lost people.

Being and making obedient disciples of Jesus is not optional. Until the church stops viewing it as optional, they will never disciple the world! Unless the global church stops disobeying the Creator of the Universe and begins to view biblical discipleship as mandatory, it will continue to become more and more irrelevant in the world! And if church leaders don't begin to emphasize obedience and discipleship, then most Christian church members will remain disobedient by NOT sharing the gospel or obeying the commands of Christ!

And those, my friends, are several of the issues hindering the growth of the Kingdom of God and the fulfillment of the Great Commission. If you want to win the world, starting with groups of lost people is the most effective way to launch a movement!

What is Expected of Most Christian Church Members?

Remember, in most traditional building-based churches today, the leaders don't require, or even emphasize, sharing the gospel or obeying the commands of Jesus. Even though it is subtle, the priorities tend to indicate that obeying Jesus and making disciples are not all that important.

What IS emphasized in the building-based church system is attending services, giving money, and volunteering in the programs. And while it is true that a person can be a Christian church member without sharing the gospel or obeying the commands of Jesus, a person cannot be a genuine disciple of Jesus without either of those two.

Always remember that Jesus said, **"Go make disciples."** He did not say, **"Go make Christian church members."** And since the Bible doesn't promise that Christian church members will go to Heaven, it's essential that we make true disciples that obey Jesus. If we all do that, then we will naturally multiply, and thus will finish the Great Commission.

Insert:

Growth in the Body of Christ Today

Obedient followers of Christ (disciples) are multiplying all over the world today!

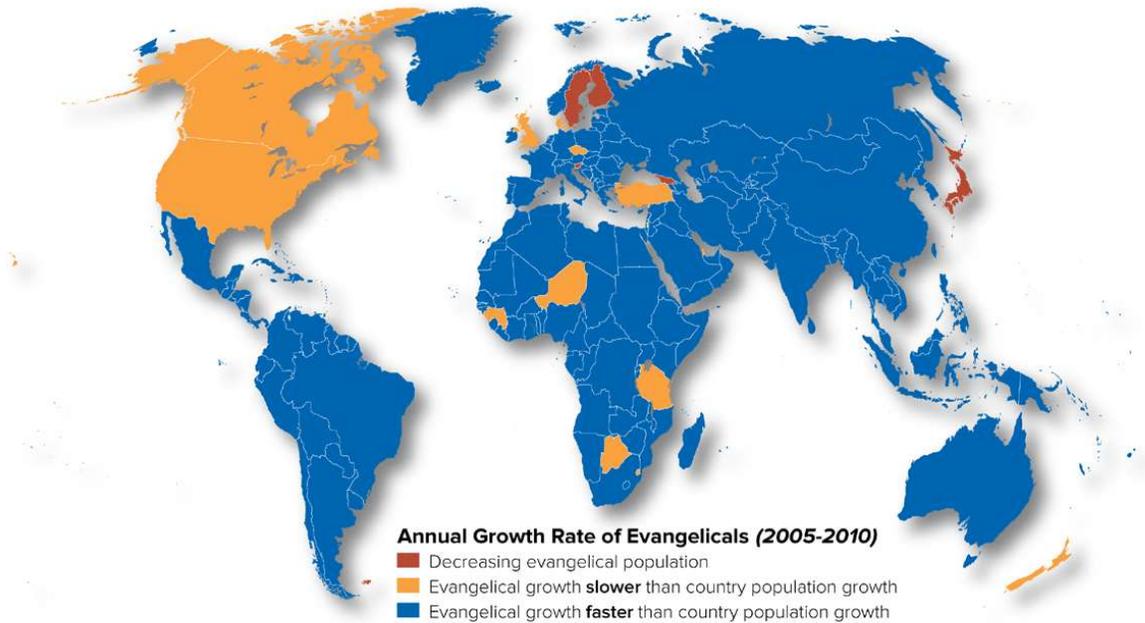
They are multiplying in China, India, and Africa; in Iran, Indonesia, North Africa; and many other nations. In fact, the body of Christ is experiencing growth throughout most of the planet at a rate faster than the population is growing. The following map will show you what I mean.

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Red indicates that the population is growing, while the followers of Christ are decreasing. In orange countries, followers of Christ are increasing, but slower than the population is growing. Blue means that the number of followers of Christ is growing faster than the population! Isn't that exciting?

One mission leader stated that if the current trends continue, the entire planet will have had the opportunity to follow Christ sometime in the 2030s! Much of this growth is happening through Disciple-Making Movements.

GROWTH RATE OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY



Other relevant statistics:

World population annual growth rate: 1.2%
World evangelical annual growth rate: 2.6%

Data from Operation World DVD-ROM 2010
Cartography by GMI
For more maps and additional GMI products, visit www.gmi.org



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Chapter 19:

How Did Jesus Make Disciples?

Let me ask some questions to stimulate this line of thinking:

Is it ok to disciple lost people? Did Jesus?

In the church world today, we tend to think we have to get people saved BEFORE we can disciple them. But is that how Jesus and the New Testament church did it?

Many people's immediate reaction to that question is "NO! Of course not." But when we stop and think about it, we see that He actually did. To get some clarity, let's consider another question.

When did the disciples of Jesus actually get saved?

Maybe you're thinking, "Why does it matter? They all got saved eventually." Or did they?

This topic is essential because once we see how Jesus made disciples, we can learn to do His work His way and see results beyond all we could ask or imagine. Stay with me here.

When did Peter get saved?

Think over all you know about Peter. I usually get four answers on this one.

Some say Peter got saved on the day Jesus called him. Maybe.

Some say it was when Peter declared, "You are the Christ! The Son of the living God." Could be.

Others say it was when Peter wept in the garden after he denied Jesus three times. That's possible.

Still others say it was when Jesus restored him at the sea of Galilee after the resurrection. This is the most popular view among the people I train.

The truth is, we don't know when Peter got saved, and we must not need to know or the Bible would tell us. Here is what I want you to see: Peter was lost when he met Jesus, and somewhere along the line, he got saved! That means that for some part of three years Peter was an unsaved disciple who was following Jesus!

When do you think Thomas got saved?

People almost universally agree that Thomas didn't get saved until AFTER Jesus rose from the dead. Most think it was when Jesus said, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!

'My Lord and my God!' Thomas exclaimed.

We can be pretty confident that Thomas was saved at that point. Right? But how long had Thomas been a Jesus disciple before he declared, "My Lord and my God"? Three years! So Thomas was an unsaved disciple who followed Jesus for three years BEFORE he became truly born again! WOW!

You see, Jesus was willing to disciple people from their point of interest and NOT only from their point of conversion! This is huge! This means that every person on the planet is a potential disciple of Jesus! You and I have a limitless supply of potential disciples. Jesus will disciple people as long as they are willing to follow Him. And if they ever want to stop following Him, He will let them do that too (John 6:66).

When do you think Judas got saved?

Jesus called him a son of perdition (John 17:12) and said that it would have been better for him if he had never been born (Matthew 26:24), so, Judas never got saved, did he? Yet he was a disciple of Jesus for three years.

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You see, as long as Judas was willing to keep following Jesus, Jesus was willing to keep discipling him. Jesus included him even though He knew that Judas would later betray Him. One of the reasons DMMs are so effective is that they disciple everyone who is willing to be disciplined. Of course, the gospel must be shared at or near the beginning of the process, but everyone gets disciplined whether they respond to the gospel on day 1 or 100. As long as they are willing to keep following Jesus, we should keep discipling them.

Remember Matthew? Picture him in his tax-collecting booth. Then picture Jesus pausing in front of that booth and saying, "Follow Me." Matthew becomes a disciple the moment he joins the group of men following Jesus down the road. But he doesn't get saved until some day in the future that we won't know until we meet him in Heaven.

So DISCIPLE EVERYONE! If they are willing to take the next step with Jesus, let's guide them in taking that next step.

The Training Program of Jesus

Let's look at how Jesus took ordinary people and trained and equipped them to disciple nations through four basic steps. As we go through it, ask yourself, "Where am I at in this process?"

Step 1 - Watch me. I'll SHOW you how it's done.

Open your Bible to Mark 1 and read the whole chapter. In Mark 1:17 (NLT), Jesus says,

"Follow me, and I'll SHOW YOU HOW TO FISH FOR PEOPLE." (Emphasis mine)

If Jesus tells us that He is **showing us** how to do the work, we should pay very close attention to **what He does** (right before He calls them). He had just preached a simple Gospel message that anyone could say. In verse 15, He said,

"The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!"

In verse 25, He casts out a demon. In verses 32-34, He heals many people and casts out more demons. In verse 35, He gets alone to pray. And in verses 40-42, He heals a man with leprosy.

So, is it logical to conclude that the way Jesus showed them to fish for souls is by:

- Preaching repentance for the Kingdom of God
- Spending time in prayer
- Casting out demons
- Healing the sick
- Cleansing lepers?

We are about to find out.

Step 2 - Now I'll watch you.

Next, in John 4:1-2, we see Jesus overseeing his disciples as they "get their feet wet" in the work of ministry. Notice what's happening here.

Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples.

Notice that Jesus is doing the preaching, and His disciples are the ones doing the baptizing. Jesus is right there watching His disciples do the work of His ministry.

Step 3 - Try it on your own for a little while.

Then, Jesus sends the twelve disciples only to the people of Israel. Later, He seems to send the 72 to the nearby Samaritans and/or gentiles. I say that because when He sends the 72, He makes a point to command them twice to

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“Eat whatever they give you.” (If they were only going to Jews, He wouldn’t have to say that because all Jewish people eat a kosher diet.)

The first example is the sending of the twelve, recorded in Matthew 10, Mark 6, and Luke 9. I recommend you read these and write down everything Jesus told them to do.

Let’s look at one passage from Matthew 10:7-8a.

As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.

Amazing! Isn’t that almost exactly what we see Jesus doing in Mark 1 when He was showing them how to fish for people? Then we see the sending of the 72 found in Luke 10:1-11 where He sends them a little further afield. You have already studied that, so I will simply point out that steps 1-3 of this training process were in preparation for His final command, to disciple the whole world. And when they went to disciple the world, they did it this way. They did it the way they had been trained!

Step 4 - Graduation

The goal of any training process is proficiency. The trainer looks forward to the day when they can say, “You’ve got it! Now, go do it.” We see this clearly in Luke 22:35-36a.

Then Jesus asked them, “When I sent you without a purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?” “Nothing,” they answered. He said to them, “But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag...”

In this passage, Jesus reminds His disciples of the times He sent them while He was training them. He reminds them of the times when they went out with nothing so they could learn to rely on the provision of God.

But now Jesus is telling them to bring money and clothes. In fact, the words “But now” indicate a change. Something is happening here. The disciples are graduating from Jesus’ training program and into a lifestyle of discipleship. They are leaving their time of preparation and entering a new way of life. From now on they will be living according to what they were trained to do. Now they will be spending the rest of their lives discipling the nations of the world!

What about you? Do you see yourself in one of the steps? And, with God helping you, are you willing to continue in the training program of Jesus until you come to your graduation?

The One Rule of Paul for All the Churches

Let me ask you something. If Paul laid down a rule and said it applied to ALL churches, do you think it applies to your church today? Does it apply to you and to me today? Where did he get his methods and his message from? He tells us in Galatians 1:12:

“I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.”

So, if Paul received his teaching directly from Jesus Christ, then the original source of this rule for all the churches isn’t Paul. The real source of this rule is Jesus Christ himself. Right?

Paul’s rule is found in 1 Corinthians 7:17, 20, 24, but we will first look at the verses **out of context** to better see the rule. In ten years of training pastors and leaders around the world, I’ve never once had anyone know where the “one rule of Paul for all the churches” was found in the Bible. This seems to be because when we read this passage of scripture in context, we tend to get distracted by the context, and end up missing the rule.

Now, let’s look at the first time Paul mentions this rule in 1 Corinthians 7:17:

Nevertheless, each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches.

Notice he says that this rule applies to ALL the churches. That would mean that it still applies to Jesus’ church today, right?

The second time Paul lays down the rule is 1 Corinthians 7:20:

Each person should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.

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He is repeating the same rule with slightly different wording.

The third time Paul lays down this rule, verse 24, he adds a detail that increases the importance of obeying this rule:

Brothers and sisters, each person, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation they were in when God called them. (Emphasis mine)

Have you ever heard that if something is repeated in scripture, we should pay special attention to it? And if something is repeated three times, we must pay extra special attention to it. Paul repeats this rule for all the churches three times, so it must be really, really important! Paul is making a point. It seems like he's saying, "When you come to Christ, stay where you are." In verse 24, he adds, "as responsible to God" to the command. Why do you think he adds that? Is it possible Paul is saying that you and I are responsible to God for what happens if we don't obey this rule?

Let me give you an example of not obeying this rule from my own life. When I came to Christ, I immediately quit my job, moved out of my parent's house, and entered the ministry. I had been working for a car rental company and I was the most pagan, godless sinner in the place. But because I left my job, I never got the chance to be a witness for Christ to my co-workers. They never got the opportunity to witness my transformation as I was being changed by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

A similar thing happened with my family. I grew up in a religious home, but my family was not born again. I left so quickly that I never had the chance to influence them for Christ or let them see the change taking place in me. And as far as I know, not one person in my family of origin is born again as of this writing.

But here is an example of someone who obeyed this rule. Some years ago, a woman who was a disciple-maker living in a large city in southeast Asia went to the market on the same day and at the same time each day. As time passed, she became friends with another woman who came to the market at that same time each week.

When the disciple-maker became aware that her new friend was interested in learning about God, she offered to teach her how to get to know God in the comfort of her own home or office. The woman was very receptive to that idea, so she invited the disciple-maker to come to her office on a particular day and specific time.

When the disciple-maker arrived at the appointed place and time, she thought she must have gotten the address wrong because she was standing in front of a house of prostitution! But she was at the correct address—the woman she had befriended was a "madam" who operated four houses of prostitution.

Sensing that God was working, the disciple-maker went inside the house of prostitution and began teaching the madam how to get to know God and learn from Him for herself. As time went on, the prostitutes that worked for her became curious about what she was learning, and after some time, ALL of the prostitutes in all four brothels came to Christ! In fact, they all gave up prostitution and now work as disciple-makers to the other prostitutes in that city. Praise the Lord!

It all happened because this disciple-maker knew the one rule of Paul and applied it to her ministry. Imagine what would have happened if the madam had quit her job immediately and gone and joined a local church and/or bible study?

Yes, God would have won one soul, but what of the hundred or so prostitutes that worked for her? Who's grip would they still be in? The devil's, right? And maybe that grip would have gotten tighter. Those prostitutes might've decided that they didn't like this Jesus or His followers that took away their beloved madam. I've seen it many times. Situations in which one person comes to Christ and immediately leaves their friends, family, and job. Those very same friends, family, and co-workers often become opposed to the Jesus and His people that "stole" their loved one.

So let's obey the one rule of Paul and leave new disciples where we find them, whenever possible. This can also reduce persecution because the person coming to Christ remains an insider in their relationships instead of quickly becoming an outsider by leaving.

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Since Paul gave this rule, it's safe to assume that he went back home to share what had happened to him with the people he loved the most. Before Jesus changed it, his name was Saul of Tarsus because he was from the city of Tarsus. Check out this passage from Acts 11:25:

Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul,

Barnabas had to go to Tarsus to find Saul because after getting saved and trained by Jesus, Paul went back to his hometown. It was likely to show them and tell them about Jesus, applying this rule to his own life.

Don't Help the Devil!

I know it's a strange thing to say. None of us would consciously or purposefully help the devil, but what about assisting him without knowing it?

Extractional evangelism does more harm than good and helps the devil, while inclusional evangelism does not.

Extractional evangelism is when you lead one person to Christ and then extract them from their circle of influence and bring them to yours. Inclusional evangelism is where you include their social circle in your gospel presentation and help them all learn to follow Christ right where they are. We touched on this in the "One Rule of Paul" section. But can you think of any examples of extractional evangelism in scripture, even a single one? If you understand chess, then you know what it means to sacrifice a pawn. Well, that's how the devil plays. He is happy to sacrifice a pawn once in a while because if we win one, he wins the rest.

Imagine there is a household of seven neutral people. What usually happens to the other six if we preach to just one and lead that one to faith, our church, and our bible study? Usually, the six don't stay neutral. Typically they develop a disdain, dislike, and distrust of us, the organization, and even for Jesus who took their loved one away. So in that scenario, even though Jesus gets one, the devil gets the other six. And, in that scenario, who is winning in the battle for the souls of men? That's right. Satan is! And if we operate that way, we are helping the devil while we think we are growing the Kingdom of Jesus!

Consider This:

If Jesus wants us to fish with a net and to leave people where we find them when they come to Christ...

And if Jesus really is the source of the One Rule of Paul for all the churches...

And if Jesus genuinely wants us to imitate Him...

Then we should see these practices in His ministry and in the ministries of His followers.

Wouldn't you agree?

We will have much better results and produce more fruit if we operate Jesus' way!

Jesus' Work Jesus' Way?

When we do Jesus' work Jesus' way, we can expect to see Jesus' results. And Jesus' way is to disciple the whole town, household, or social network and leave them where we find them. By operating this way, we will be expanding the Kingdom of Jesus by taking new territory for our KING!

Consider Jesus and the woman at the well. In John 4:7, Jesus starts a conversation with one person to gain access to the entire town (John 4:29-30). He stayed in Samaria for just two days (v.39-41). He wins most of the town and then leaves them where He found them.

We also see this rule at work in Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus. In Luke 19:5, Jesus utilizes the interest of one man to gain access to his household. Then in verses 9 and 10, we see that salvation came to the household, and they all stayed where they were when Jesus left. Therefore, Jesus was again fishing with a net (winning the household). And He left these new disciples right where He found them! He is literally taking new territory for His Kingdom!

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THIS IS HUGE!!! Our work as Great Commission disciples involves taking territory for the Kingdom of Jesus! It's not about extracting people from the lost world and bringing them to our world. In physical warfare, when an army takes territory, they then attempt to keep that territory! Spiritual warfare is no different.

In Mark 5:1-20, we see a man running to Jesus to be delivered from thousands of demons. After he is freed from the demons, he wants to join Jesus' group of followers. Instead, Jesus sends him to share about his deliverance (verses 18-20) to his own people in the region of the Decapolis:

But Jesus said, "No, go home to your family, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been."

Three chapters later, Jesus feeds four thousand people in the same area (Mark 8:6-9). Is it possible this crowd of 4,000 gathered because of the testimony of this one man? Maybe. Once again, Jesus left this man where He found him but was still "fishing with a net." Jesus reached the delivered demoniac's social circle by leaving **him right where He found him and sending him to his own people.**

Peter going to the home of Cornelius in Acts 10 follows the same pattern. It begins with one person and their family in verses 1-2. In verse 24, Cornelius gathers the people who matter most to him in his house. The Holy Spirit falls on everyone in the house (in other words, the entire social network of Cornelius came to faith in Christ that day), Peter stays with Cornelius for just a few days, and trusting them to God, he goes back to Jerusalem. Peter is simply following the example of Christ by fishing with a net and leaving those who came to Christ, right where he found them! Are you willing to do the same thing?

We see the same practices at work in the ministry of Paul, who received his message and methods directly from Jesus. Look again at Acts 16:15; first, he meets Lydia by the river but ends up in her house and her whole household gets baptized.

When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

Then, in verses 29-30, Paul and Silas find the city jailer kneeling before them, asking how to get saved. The jailer is thinking about how HE can get saved.

The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

What would you do in that situation? Seriously, what would you do if someone knelt down in front of you and asked you how to get saved? Most of us would lead them to Christ in some version of the sinner's prayer.

But that is NOT what Paul and Silas do. Paul and Silas are focused on getting the **WHOLE FAMILY** saved! They preach the gospel to, and baptize, the entire household before sunrise. Then they leave town just hours after the jailer's family receives Christ. Read it for yourself in verses 31-34 and 40.

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

40 After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.

Again, we see Paul and Silas imitating Jesus by fishing with a net and we see the One Rule of Paul because they **leave these new disciples right where they found them.** If you find a way to incorporate fishing with a net AND leaving them right where you find them into your life and ministry, the fruit produced will be beyond all you could ever ask or imagine.

How To Find People Of Peace?

Do a group Discovery Bible Study (DBS) on Colossians 4:5-6 with a new facilitator if you're going through this book with a group; if not, do a personal 3-column DBS, which you can print from our website or write in a notebook.

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These verses make it clear that we need to be wise in both how we act and what we say in order to identify people who are looking for God.

Do you remember a time in your life when you were moving toward God, but you weren't quite there yet? If you were anything like me, you were searching for someone to help you figure it out. I am convinced that the people who are being pulled to Jesus by the Father are searching for us MORE than we are searching for them. We simply need to identify ourselves so they can find us.

Not Retired from Making Disciples!

A retired woman attended a DMM training in northern California some time ago. She wanted to spend the rest of her days doing something that had an eternal impact. She committed the matter to prayer, and before long, she had a dream in which she saw a street sign and knew where that street was.

The next day, she got into her vehicle and drove to that street. She didn't see a single person as she went slowly down the road. At the stop sign at the end of the block, a woman crossed the street in front of her. They looked at each other through the windshield and then again as the woman walked past the driver's side of the vehicle. Once there was no glass between them, the woman in the car said, "Hasn't God given us a beautiful day today?" The woman crossing the street stopped in her tracks, approached the car, and said, "You know God?" Our retired friend responded, "Yes, I know Him. In fact, He sent me here today to find someone who is looking for Him." The lady said, "I'm looking for Him." So they set up a time that the disciple-maker could go to her house and share the gospel with the lady's friends and family.

When this retired disciple-maker arrived, there were people everywhere with loud music coming from the house. The disciple-maker was about to leave when the lady came out of the house and said, "Where are you going?" The disciple-maker said, "I came to share the gospel with your friends and family, and instead, you are having a party." The woman responded, "All these people came to hear what you have to say." Isn't that awesome?

By the time I heard that story, more than 100 New Testament fellowships had started that went from northern California through Mexico and into Central America. And it all happened because one retired lady obeyed a dream and then seasoned her speech with spiritual salt so she could make the most of that opportunity! I believe God will do things like that in your life and mine if we join Him in what He is doing.

This is why, at Go Multiply, **OUR MISSION** is to *finish the Great Commission by launching Disciple-Making Movements in every nation and among every people group on Earth*. We are convinced that launching Disciple-Making Movements is the only way to finish the task of discipling the nations.

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Chapter 20

True Maturity in Christ

I had been following Christ for years before I realized what the Holy Spirit was trying to accomplish in my life and in the life of every believer. I heard one mission leader put it this way, "Being a follower of Christ is really very simple. You simply let the Holy Spirit make you a little more like Jesus each and every day."

He was right. As disciple-makers, we are helping people reach true biblical maturity, which is becoming just like Jesus. We are NOT supposed to be making better Christian church members. Christlikeness is the destination where the Holy Spirit is trying to take every single follower of Jesus. Look at these verses to see what I'm talking about:

1 John 2:6

Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.

If we claim to follow Jesus, we should live as Jesus did.

Romans 8:29

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.

Notice that every genuine follower of Jesus is being conformed to the image of Jesus. So again, God is working to make us just like Jesus.

We see the same thing in Ephesians 4:13:

...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.

What does "attain the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" mean to you? To me it sounds like we are supposed to become just like Jesus. Now let's look at HOW Jesus intends to accomplish that. We'll examine again Ephesians 4:11-14a, because it explains how to attain maturity:

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching.

Starting at verse 14 and working backward through this passage, we see that people who remain spiritually immature are tossed around by different winds of teaching. This is what we see in many Christians today. They say they follow Jesus, but they remain immature. Why is that?

In verse 13, we see that Jesus intends people to be unified, mature, and just like Himself. Yet the Christian church has over thirty thousand denominations today. That is not unity. Plus, many church leaders feel like babysitters because their church members are **not** mature, and Christlikeness is rarely achieved in anyone's life!

Then in verse 12, we see that the body of Christ is supposed to be equipped to do His works. One translation says, "to do the work of ministry." Those with leadership gifts (verse 11) are supposed to prepare the rest of the believers to do ministry; then they won't have to do it all themselves, having some of the burden lifted off.

Verse 11 clearly states what should be happening. Could it be that the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds, and Teachers aren't doing a good job of equipping God's people for ministry today? Notice that verse 11 states that Jesus gave some people the gift of teaching. The issue is **not** whether or not God allows people to teach. Of course, He does! The bulk of the work of the Great Commission is in "**teaching**" obedience to all the commands of Jesus! But God wants to see the body of Christ equipped, built up, unified, mature, and strongly resembling Christ! He does not want a body that remains infantile and is tossed around by every new wind of (false) teaching.

It is critical that we employ a spiritual operating system that ensures our members have regular, meaningful interactions with people who possess all five leadership gifts! Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds, and

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Teachers are essential to achieve well-rounded maturity in all followers of Christ. Most Christian church members have regular exposure to shepherds or teachers but not to folks with the other three gifts. Ask God how and where to find them.

Look again at the beginning of verse 12. It begins by stating the reason Jesus gave these gifts to His church! So if you have one of these five leadership gifts, your primary job **is not** to do ministry! It is to equip the saints so **they** do ministry!

Who Are Your Teachers?

Most of us have been conditioned to think we **need** human teachers and won't grow or mature without them. That is actually **not** what the Bible teaches. While human teachers are given by God, and we can learn a great deal from them, they are **not** essential to our spiritual growth. Jesus is the one who gave human teachers to the church. But He does not intend for us to become dependent upon them. Consider these verses:

John 6:45

As it is written in the Scriptures, 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.

Who is the teacher in this verse? That's right, it's God the Father! It is a huge revelation to many people to learn that Almighty God, Creator of the Universe, is willing to personally teach them.

Matthew 23:10

And don't let anyone call you 'Teacher,' for you have only one teacher, the Messiah.

Who is the teacher in this verse? That's right, It's Jesus Christ Himself!

John 14:26

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

Who is your teacher in this passage? It's the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 2:7

Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

Who does Paul say will give insight to Timothy? The Lord will. So you can ask God to provide insight on any passage or on any situation in life, and He will.

1 John 2:27a

But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you everything you need to know, and what he teaches is true.

Who keeps you from being led astray and teaches you all things? The indwelling Holy Spirit will teach you all things. This passage literally says we don't **need** human teachers.

The issue is dependency. Where do you get your spiritual food from? If you and I only know how to learn from a human teacher once a week for a 30 to 60 minute teaching, we will be spiritually malnourished the rest of the week, and our spiritual growth will be stunted. Sadly, this is what we see in far too many Christian lives today. And it is not God's intention. God desires for you and I to learn from the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, at any time of the day or night, for application instead of for knowledge accumulation. Learning directly from God is the key to rapid spiritual development. Try to avoid getting stuck in the rut of just listening to preachers online, too. They are still humans. You need to learn directly from the triune God so that you won't be led astray by the false teachings that **will** come our way in these last days.

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Conclusion:

Let's Recap What We've Learned

Analyze every spiritual practice in your life and ministry through the Spiritual Firewall: **“WHERE DO YOU SEE THAT IN THE PRACTICES OF JESUS OR the New Testament church?”** If they didn't or wouldn't do it, maybe we shouldn't either.

Fish with a net and not a hook. When fishing for people, target their whole social network instead of just one person.

The way to make a disciple is to Go, Preach the gospel, Baptize those who respond, and Teach them to obey ALL of Jesus' commands.

Don't focus on making church. Focus on making disciples, and Jesus will build a church out of those disciples.

The five characteristics of a disciple are:

- Obey without question or hesitation.

- Memorize ALL the teaching of their rabbi.

- Agree with their rabbi on the Old Testament.

- Imitate the actions of their rabbi.

- Gather more disciples to their rabbi.

- Look for people of peace by acting with wisdom and seasoning your speech with godly salt.

- Use the DBS process personally to grow and learn directly from God and launch New Testament churches everywhere the Lord gives you the opportunity.

Why Not Start a Movement Yourself?

Pray, pray, and pray some more. This is Jesus' work so ask Him to guide every aspect of it.

Commit to personally learn and obey ALL of Jesus' commands (Appendix A).

Start a Discovery Bible Study among your friends and family.

- Everyone in the group shares what they are learning with LOST people.

As you find spiritually hungry people,

- Share the Gospel with them and their social network.

- Start a DBS among their friends and family leaving them where you found them.

Encourage everyone in the groups to regularly go out personally and two-by-two and actively watch for people who are looking for God.

Importance of Prayer

Jesus said, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Therefore, everything we try to do apart from Him amounts to nothing. He also said that He has been given all the authority in the universe and that He will be with us (with all authority) to the end of this age. So please talk to Him about everything you do, and don't do anything without talking it over with Him first.

What are You Going to Do?

People often have a powerful reaction to this material. Usually by the end of a training, the Holy Spirit has been working on them and already giving them some personal action points. Has He been doing that to you?

An Assemblies of God pastor in Venezuela said, "I feel like I've been born again...again."

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One 80-year-old pastor in India was angry. He said, "I've been doing ministry the traditional way for 60 years, and I'm just learning this now?"

I don't know how old you are as you reach the end of this book. But I am confident that if you follow Jesus Christ, you will want to maximize the time you have left to serve Him.

There is no better way than to start doing His work, His way. You may feel you must do something in response to all of this information. In the space below, write down what you feel led to do and when you will do it. And share it with a trusted friend so that you will have some accountability to DO what you feel led to do. Please do something within 48 hours! People who wait longer than that tend to do nothing! Please don't be one of them.

Complete this sentence: Jesus, in the power and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, I begin my journey of being a disciple who makes disciples by: _____ In Jesus' name, Amen!

GET IN ON THE ENDGAME OF GOD!

This might seem a strange title for a book about discipleship and disciple-making movements. I chose that title because I'm convinced that multiplying obedient disciples in small groups is how God is finishing the Great Commission. As the final days of this age unfold, we are told that wickedness, persecution, and deception will increase, and many will fall away from Jesus. We must learn how to be the rabbit model, New Testament church while there is still time so we can survive, thrive, and NOT fall away in the final days of this age.

Finally

Now, more than ever, the body of Christ must embrace its destiny and come to the level of maturity where we all obey Jesus, imitate Jesus, learn from God, and make more disciples who do the same. May your surrendered life produce lasting fruit beyond all you could ask or imagine until the return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! Amen.

Advancing Jesus' Kingdom at Home and Abroad!

For the latest information, please go to www.GoMultiply.org to sign up for our newsletter.

To request an onsite discipleship training, email training@GoMultiply.org

Give this book to everyone you know who is passionate about making disciples and the work of God. Give it to every pastor, elder, deacon, bishop, or seminary professor or student you know.

Pray that doing Jesus' work Jesus' way will get back into the fabric of the mainstream church.

Do a book study with the mission-minded people in your life. It could be the beginning of a movement that multiplies to the ends of the Earth.

YOU are the person of peace in your social network. Disciple them in Jesus' name!

May God be glorified and His Kingdom advanced through everything that results from your reading of this book!

Consider Supporting Go Multiply

If this information has benefited you and you can see yourself using it to further your impact for the Kingdom of God, please prayerfully consider supporting this work. We are constantly receiving invitations to launch movements around the world, and your support will help us do so. Go to www.GoMultiply.org, click on "Give Now," and then give whatever amount seems right to you and the Holy Spirit.

Happy discipling! I'm looking forward to meeting you in Heaven, if not sooner.

Appendix A

All the Commands of Jesus

This list is in progress. If your copy of this book does not contain the list. Please check back or contact us to be notified upon its completion.

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Matthew 4:4	Matthew 7:24-27	Matthew 15:3-6
Matthew 4:7	Matthew 8:4	Matthew 15:10-11
Matthew 4:10	Matthew 8:13	Matthew 15:13-14
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Matthew 7:13-14	Matthew 13:22-23	Matthew 23:2-4
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Matthew 7:21-23	Matthew 14:27-31	Matthew 23:8-10

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Mark 2:19-20
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Mark 8:15-21

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Mark 11:22-24
Mark 11:25
Mark 12:17
Mark 12:29-31
Mark 12:38-40
Mark 13:6
Mark 13:7-8
Mark 13:9-10
Mark 13:11
Mark 13:12-13
Mark 13:14-17
Mark 13:18-20
Mark 13:21-23
Mark 13:28-29
Mark 13:33-34
Mark 13:35-37
Mark 14:6
Mark 14:7-9
Mark 14:13-15
Mark 14:22-25
Mark 14:32-34
Mark 14:37-38
Mark 14:41-42
Mark 16:15-16
Mark 16:17-18
Mark 16:20

LUKE

Luke 4:8
Luke 4:12
Luke 5:4
Luke 5:10-11
Luke 5:13-14
Luke 5:22-24
Luke 5:27-28
Luke 5:34-35
Luke 5:36-39
Luke 6:8-10
Luke 6:20-21
Luke 6:22-23

Luke 6:24-26
Luke 6:27
Luke 6:28
Luke 6:29
Luke 6:30
Luke 6:31
Luke 6:32-34
Luke 6:35-36
Luke 6:37
Luke 6:38
Luke 6:40
Luke 6:41-42
Luke 6:45
Luke 6:46-49
Luke 7:13-14
Luke 7:22-23
Luke 7:33-35
Luke 7:47-50
Luke 8:8 (5-7)
Luke 8:11-13
Luke 8:14-15
Luke 8:16-18
Luke 8:21
Luke 8:39
Luke 8:48
Luke 8:50-52
Luke 8:53-56
Luke 9:1
Luke 9:2
Luke 9:3
Luke 9:4
Luke 9:5
Luke 9:13-14
Luke 9:23-25
Luke 9:26
Luke 9:41
Luke 9:44
Luke 9:48
Luke 9:50
Luke 9:59
Luke 9:60
Luke 9:62
Luke 10:1
Luke 10:2
Luke 10:3
Luke 10:4
Luke 10:5-6
Luke 10:7
Luke 10:8
Luke 10:9
Luke 10:10-11
Luke 10:16
Luke 10:19
Luke 10:20
Luke 10:27-28
Luke 10:37 (30-36)
Luke 10:41-42
Luke 11:2-4
Luke 11:9-10 (5-8)
Luke 11:11-13
Luke 11:21-23
Luke 11:28

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Luke 11:33-36
Luke 11:39-41
Luke 11:42
Luke 11:43
Luke 11:46
Luke 11:52
Luke 12:1
Luke 12:2-3
Luke 12:4-5
Luke 12:6-7
Luke 12:8-9
Luke 12:10
Luke 12:11-12
Luke 12:15
Luke 12:21 (16-20)
Luke 12:22-23
Luke 12:24
Luke 12:25-26
Luke 12:27-28
Luke 12:29-30
Luke 12:31
Luke 12:32
Luke 12:33-34
Luke 12:35-36
Luke 12:37-40
Luke 12:47-48
Luke 12:51-53
Luke 12:56-57
Luke 12:58-59
Luke 13:3-5
Luke 13:8-9
Luke 13:24 (25-30)
Luke 14:8-9
Luke 14:10
Luke 14:11
Luke 14:12
Luke 14:13-14
Luke 14:21
Luke 14:23
Luke 14:26
Luke 14:27
Luke 14:28-30
Luke 14:31-32
Luke 14:33
Luke 14:34-35
Luke 15:7
Luke 15:10
Luke 16:9
Luke 16:10-12
Luke 16:13
Luke 16:15
Luke 16:16
Luke 16:18
Luke 16:31 (19-30)
Luke 17:1-3a
Luke 17:3b-4
Luke 17:6
Luke 17:7-10
Luke 17:14
Luke 17:19
Luke 17:22-24
Luke 17:30-32 (26-29)

Luke 17:33
Luke 18:6-8 (2-5)
Luke 18:14 (10-13)
Luke 18:16-17
Luke 18:20
Luke 18:22
Luke 18:24-25
Luke 18:29-30
Luke 18:42
Luke 19:5
Luke 19:10
Luke 19:17
Luke 19:30-31
Luke 20:18
Luke 20:24-25
Luke 20:46-47
Luke 21:2-4
Luke 21:8
Luke 21:9
Luke 21:13-15
Luke 21:17-19
Luke 21:20-21
Luke 21:25-28
Luke 21:29-31
Luke 21:34
Luke 21:35-36
Luke 22:8-12
Luke 22:17
Luke 22:19-20
Luke 22:25-26
Luke 22:32
Luke 22:35-36
Luke 22:40
Luke 22:46
Luke 22:50-51
Luke 23:28-29
Luke 24:25
Luke 24:38-39
Luke 24:46-48
Luke 24:49

JOHN

John 1:39
John 1:43
John 2:7-8
John 2:16
John 3:3
John 3:5-7
John 3:8
John 3:14-15
John 3:16
John 3:18
John 3:19-21
John 4:7
John 4:10
John 4:13-14
John 4:16
John 4:21-24
John 4:34
John 4:35
John 4:36-38
John 5:8

John 5:14
John 5:23
John 5:24
John 5:38
John 5:39-40
John 5:46-47
John 6:10
John 6:12
John 6:20
John 6:27
John 6:29
John 6:35-36
John 6:37
John 6:40
John 6:43
John 6:45
John 6:47
John 6:50-51
John 6:53-58
John 6:66-67
John 7:6-8
John 7:24
John 7:37-38
John 8:7
John 8:11
John 8:12
John 8:19
John 8:24
John 8:31-32
John 8:34-36
John 8:42
John 8:47
John 8:50-51
John 9:4
John 9:7
John 9:35
John 10:4-5
John 10:9
John 10:16
John 10:27-28
John 10:38
John 11:15
John 11:25-26
John 11:40
John 11:42
John 11:44
John 12:7-8
John 12:24
John 12:25
John 12:26
John 12:35-36
John 12:44-46
John 12:48
John 13:7-8
John 13:13-17
John 13:19-20
John 13:27
John 13:34-35
John 13:38
John 14:1-4
John 14:6-7
John 14:10-11

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John 14:12
John 14:13-14
John 14:15-17
John 14:20-21
John 14:23-26
John 14:27
John 14:28-29
John 14:31
John 15:1-2
John 15:3-4
John 15:5-8
John 15:9-10
John 15:11-12
John 15:13-14
John 15:16
John 15:17
John 15:18-19
John 15:20-21

John 15:26-27
John 16:1-4
John 16:9
John 16:23-24
John 16:25-27
John 16:33
John 17:3
John 17:6
John 17:7-8
John 17:10
John 17:11
John 17:13
John 17:16-17
John 17:18
John 17:20-21
John 17:22-23
John 17:26
John 18:11

John 18:21
John 18:37
John 20:17
John 20:21
John 20:22
John 20:23
John 20:27
John 20:29
John 21:6
John 21:10-12
John 21:15-17
John 21:19 & 22

ACTS

Acts 1:4-5
Acts 1:7-8

Now that you've committed to obey all of Jesus commands, please prayerfully read through all 4 gospels to get to know the one you are committed to obey.

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Appendix B

Scripture Tracks

Great Commission Fellowship Scriptures:

Luke 10:1-11
Matthew 28:16-20
Mark 16:15-20
Luke 24:46-49
John 20:19-23
Acts 1:4-8
Matthew 10:1 & 5-16
Luke 9:1-6
Mark 6:6b-13
Luke 5:1-11
John 6:44-45
Matthew 16:13-20
Ezekiel 33:1-11
Colossians 4:2-6
1 Corinthians 7: 17-24
Matthew 7:21-27
John 14:23-27
James 1:22-25
1 John 2:3-6
Matthew 23:8-12
John 15:1-17
1 Peter 4:1-11
1 Peter 4:12-19
John 16:1-15
Mark 2:18-22
2 Corinthians 10:3-5
Ephesians 6:10-17
Luke 14:25-35
John 4:4-42
Matthew 15:1-20
Acts 2:42-47
Ephesians 4:11-16
1 John 2:24-27

Discovering God Scriptures:

Genesis 1:1-25
Genesis 2:4-24
Genesis 3:1-13
Genesis 3:14-24
Genesis 6:5-8
Genesis 6:9-8:14
Genesis 8:15-9:17
Genesis 12:1-8; 15:1-6; 17:1-7
Genesis 22:1-19
Exodus 12:1-28
Exodus 20: 1-21
Leviticus 4:1-35
Isaiah 53
Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-20
Matthew 3; John 1:29-34
Matthew 4:1-11
John 3:1-21
John 4:1-26, 39-42

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Luke 5:17-26
Mark 4:35-41
Mark 5:1-20
John 11:1-44
Matthew 26:26-30
John 18:1-19:16
Luke 23:32-56
Luke 24:1-35

Obedience-based Discipleship Scriptures:

Matthew 4:1-11
Luke 5:1-11, Matthew 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20
John 1:35-51
Matthew 10:16-23
John 15:18-25
Matthew 10:23-31, Mark 13:9-13
Matthew 10:18-22, Mark 13:11-13
Matthew 5:10-12
Matthew 5:13-16
Matthew 5:17-23
Matthew 7:17-23
Matthew 19:1-6
Matthew 5:33-37
Matthew 5:38-42
Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-36
Matthew 7:12
Luke 6:27:38; Matthew 5:38-42
Matthew 6:1-4, Luke 12:33-34
Matthew 6:5-8 Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 11:1-4
Matthew 6:5-13, Luke 11:1-4
Matthew 18:21-22

Discovering Spiritual Community Scriptures:

Romans 15:1-7
1 Corinthians 1:10-17; Philippians 4:2-3
Colossians 3:12-14
Romans 12:3-5
Philippians 2:1-4
Malachi 2:10-16
1 Thessalonians 5:4-11; Ephesians 4:29
Galatians 6:1-5
1 Corinthians 12:21-27
James 5:13-16
Deuteronomy 5:21; Exodus 20:17
Romans 13:8-10
Leviticus 19:11
Galatians 5:13-15
Romans 12:10
Matthew 18:15-17
Hebrews 13:16
Romans 1:11-12
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Hebrews 3:12-13
Hebrews 10:19-25
Galatians 5:22-26
Leviticus 19:15-16
Romans 14:20-22
1 John 1:5-7
1 Peter 4:10
Ephesians 4:23; Matthew 18:21-35
1 Peter 4:10

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Proverbs 3:28; Luke 6:30
Romans 16:16; 1 Peter 5:14
Leviticus 19:18
Zechariah 8:16-17
Zechariah 7:9-10
James 5:7-10
Deuteronomy 15:7-8
Proverbs 3:29
Romans 12:16, 1 Peter 3:8
Leviticus 19:17
Romans 12:10
1 Peter 4:9
1 Peter 5:5
Romans 14:10-17
Romans 15:14
Deuteronomy 23:19
James 4:12
1 Thessalonians 5:15, 2 Timothy 2:22-26
Ephesians 4:32
Exodus 20:16; Deuteronomy 5:20; Colossians 3:9-10
Philippians 2:1-4
Obadiah 1:12
Mark 12:28-34
Zechariah 7:9-10
Deuteronomy 15:11
Ephesians 4:1-3
Mark 9:42-50
1 Thessalonians 5:12-14
James 5:13-16
Matthew 5:21-26
1 Peter 2:13-17
Leviticus 19:18
1 Corinthians 10:24

Discovering Leadership Scriptures

Matthew 4:18-22
Matthew 5:1-16
Matthew 6:33-34
Matthew 6:1-8
Matthew 6:16-18
Matthew 6:19-34
Matthew 7:1-6
Matthew 18:15-20
Matthew 7:7-12
Matthew 7:21-28
Matthew 9:9-13
Matthew 9:18-33
Matthew 9:35-38
Matthew 10:1-16
Matthew 10:17-31
Matthew 5:43-48
Matthew 11:25-30
Matthew 13:3-9
Matthew 13:18-23
Matthew 14:13-21
Matthew 20:29-34
Matthew 16:13-28
Matthew 17:1-13
Matthew 17:14-21
Matthew 18:15-35
Matthew 19: 3-9

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Matthew 20: 20-28

Matthew 25:14-30

Matthew 25: 31-46

Matthew 28:16-20

Appendix C

THE COMING KINGDOM OF JESUS!

Rest assured that the next age, the 1000-year reign of Jesus, which is coming soon, will be infinitely better than anything you or I could imagine in this life.

In Matthew 24:14, Jesus gives us a clue how to accelerate His return. He tells us that first, this good news of eternal life through Him will be preached to all nations (the Greek word for nations is *ethnos*, and it is where we get the word ethnicities from). Therefore, every ethnic group needs to hear the Gospel and have the opportunity to follow Jesus, and THEN the end will come!

Recently, I was surprised to learn (and you may be too) that the most significant topic in the Bible in terms of volume is the coming 1000-year Kingdom of Jesus. In other words, no topic has more total words dedicated to it in the entire Bible than the coming Kingdom of Jesus.

Following is a partial list of scriptures that speak about His Kingdom. You will be blessed to look them up and study them in DBS fashion, either by yourself, with a friend, or group. In the space provided, write what you learn about the coming Kingdom.

Psalm 2:1-12

Psalm 72

Isaiah 2:2-4

Isaiah 11:1-10

Isaiah 35:1-10

Isaiah 55:12-13

Isaiah 65:17-25

Jeremiah 31:3-14

Ezekiel 47:1-12

Daniel 2:43-45

Daniel 7:13-14

Daniel 7:17-18

Daniel 7:21-22

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Daniel 7:27

Hosea 3:4-5

Joel 2:18-27

Joel 3:18

Amos 9:13-14

Zechariah 9:10

Zechariah 14:5b-11

Micah 4:1-4

Luke 1:30-33

Revelation 2:26

Revelation 3:21

Revelation 5:10

Revelation 20:2-6

Revelation 20:7-1

Now that you've written some details about the coming Kingdom from each of these passages, take a few minutes to write a paragraph in your own words describing what the Kingdom of Jesus will be like in the space provided below. Then find someone to tell.

The purpose of this exercise is to help you see that the coming of Christ's Kingdom is something to look forward to and not to dread. Please encourage others to look forward to it as well.

Appendix D

What a Disciple Making Movement (DMM) is and What it is Not!

A DMM is a spontaneous movement out of human control; ongoing and unstoppable. A DMM is not highly controlled and managed; it is not hierarchical, systematic, or highly structured. A DMM is the rapid multiplication of groups of disciples. It is not slow, sequential, methodical addition.

The DMM formula looks like this: 2 » 4 » 8 » 16 » 32 » 64 » 128 » 256 » 512 » 1024 (groups) or this 1 » 5 » 25 » 125 » 625 » 3125 » 15,625 » 78,125 » 390,625 » 1,953,125 (groups of disciples). It does not look like this: 1 » 2 » 3 » 4 » 5 » 6 » 7 » 8 » 9 » 10.

A DMM is primarily disciples making disciples. It belongs to the people; it is led by the people; it is for the people. A DMM focuses on replication. It is not about the expansion of denominations or the growth of organizations. DMMs have a “no one left behind” policy; DMMs have the desire to see a church for every person. A DMM is not about marking territory by planting a denominational organization or growing large, highly programmatic religious organizations.

DMMs thrive in an environment of persecution and chaos. DMMs are messy. They do not thrive in an atmosphere of controls, policies, procedures, and traditions. (The New Testament was written primarily to the persecuted.) A DMM is counter-intuitive. It does not fit management theory or organizational development.

DMMs have a core value of discovering the person of peace. If there is no person of peace, there is no Kingdom multiplication. It is not about choosing a town, finding a place (property), constructing a building, starting religious activities, and inviting people to attend.

A DMM is locally led from day one. It is not started by outsiders who intend someday to *turn over* the ministry to the local people. In DMMs, there are no foreign-owned churches. The fellowships are made up of the local people and belong to the local people.

A DMM is family-based and is about the church emerging from within the culture of the people. It does not extract individual respondents from their families and communities, re-culturing them and then sending them as *outsiders* back to their communities as *foreign* evangelists.

A DMM is facilitated by ordinary people, uneducated and non-credentialed. It is not built on, or by, highly-trained professionals with extensive credentials and proven leadership skills.

A DMM is about developing independent leaders. It is not about building a mass of followers for ourselves. A DMM focuses on the obedient discipleship of *every* member. It is not about the many following the few.

A DMM is discipleship-based, not evangelism based. It is built on the development of a few obedient disciples. It is not based on evangelistic campaigns, or even personal evangelism. It is not about media, marketing, and attractive events. It is not about posters of *Evangelist “So-and-So” – The Man of God...*

A DMM is about transforming individuals, families, and communities through obedient discipleship. It is not about religious conversions but spiritual relationships with Jesus and others.

DMMs are simple. Simple men and women with the simple Gospel for simple people. DMMs are not sophisticated. They are not about dogma, programs, resources, creeds, clothes, pulpits, titles, systematic theologies, etc. All that is required of you to be part of a DMM is availability, willingness to share, and obedience.

DMMs are inexpensive. (Western traditions are expensive). Once begun, DMMs are self-supporting from day one and tend to expand without outside resources at all.

A DMM has a very high ratio of local workers to missionaries. Disciples view themselves as missionaries. In DMMs, there are no passive spectators. Everyone is involved.

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In a DMM, a high percentage of the work is less than two years old. DMMs do not focus on chronological maturity. Maturity is gauged by obedience, NOT by accumulated knowledge.

A DMM is NOT about buildings. It is not a “build it and they will come” strategy. It is about helping people get to know God right where they live; in their homes, businesses, and communities. A DMM is not found in religious buildings; the fellowships are simply reproducing groups of obedient followers of Christ, not the building with the cross on top and the sign out front.

In a DMM, there is a high commitment to the health and welfare of the entire community of believers. A DMM is not about professional-led programs to care for the people.

In DMMs, churches never emerge without a heavy commitment to prayer. DMMs are not driven by human programmatic systems but by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Appendix E

Suggested Reading

Since the mid '90s, the Holy Spirit has taken me on a journey of discovery in order to bring me to where he has me today. I imagine if a person reads the same material I did they will arrive at many of the same conclusions. May the following materials be a blessing to you and aid you in becoming the most prolific disciple-maker that you can be.

Here is the list, in no particular order (except maybe the order they appear on my bookshelf):

Houses that Change the World by Wolfgang Simson
Are You a Christian or a Disciple by Edward N. Gross
Megashift by James Rutz
Real Church by Larry Crabb
The Safest Place on Earth by Larry Crabb
The Insanity of God by Nik Ripken
A Wind in the House of Islam by David Garrison
Not a Fan by Kyle Idleman
Pagan Christianity by Frank Viola and George Barna
Daring to Live on the Edge by Loren Cunningham
Contagious Disciple Making by David Watson and Paul Watson
The Kingdom Unleashed by Jerry Trousdale and Glenn Sunshine
Miraculous Movements by Jerry Trousdale
The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church by Roland Allen
Revolution by George Barna
The House Church Book by Wolfgang Simson
The School of Obedience by Andrew Murray
Crazy Love by Francis Chan