

Back to the Basics 4 - Discipleship

Recap

The Bible

- The bible is how we see and know who God is
- It is the word of God, it is alive and powerful
- It shows us the things we need to change to live according to God's will.

Worship

- We worship God through all circumstances
- Worship reveals who God is
- God desires our authentic worship

The Church

- The first Christians made church a priority
- God's word tells believers to make church a priority
- Each Christian has a vital role to play in the local church.

Discipleship

A disciple is a follower, in church terms it means to follow Jesus Christ. It is a lifelong process growing and maturing in knowledge, faith, and skill in following after Jesus.

Discipleship is based on the Great Commission

Matthew 28:16-20 pg. 487

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- This is the last direct command Jesus give His disciples. This extremely important because it was the last thing He wanted them to hear.
- Jesus gives his disciples a 3 step process
 - Go make disciples of all nations
 - Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, & the Holy Spirit
 - Teach them to observe all He has taught them
- We continue this process today and it has two applications
 - We all have a place in this process and should be seeking to move to the next step in the process.
 - Other Christians are tasked with starting and advancing this process with others, just like the disciples were.

True disciples grow into spiritual maturity

Hebrews 5:11-6:2 pg.582

11 About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, 13 for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. 14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

1 Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

- The writer is speaking firmly to believers who have become stagnant in their faith
- He makes a comparison about babies starting with milk for nourishment but eventually need more substantial food as they grow and mature.
- They began as spiritual babies, drinking spiritual milk.
 - These include basic and foundation things they should have started with
 - The problem is they should have not matured spiritually even though adequate time for this to happen has passed.
- “Solid food” for mature believers means putting into practice the basic truths of the the faith and making adjustments in their life to pursue good over evil.
- This is discipleship - we all start as immature believers, needing to hear and learn the basic truths of the faith. However true disciples move on from that into maturity and putting these things into practice.

True discipleship takes work

1 Timothy 4:6-16

6 If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. 7 Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; 8 for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. 9 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. 10 For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

11 Command and teach these things. 12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. 14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. 15 Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. 16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

- Paul compares spiritual training to physical training
 - Just as results in the weight room take consistent work over time, spiritual training works in the same way.
 - Spiritual training results are more valuable and last longer than physical training results do
- Paul encourages Timothy to continue his spiritual training and to flex his spiritual muscles in the church. Regardless of his age, he is capable because of his training.
 - The same is true for all of us. We are to put effort and energy into discipleship.
 - This training is the way we are equipped to carry out the great commission of making, baptizing, and teaching new disciples.
- Discipleship is necessary to live out God's plan for your life and to accomplish the mission Jesus has given to each believer.

Discussion Questions

- Why would someone's last words carry more weight than general conversations?
- Image you or a friend were moving far away, what would you want to tell before they moved?
- How does that compare to the last thing Jesus told his disciples? (The Great Commission)
- How would you describe what discipleship? Why is it important?
- How would you describe things that are in the "spiritual milk" category? What things are necessary to nourish immature believers?
- How would you describe things that are in the "spiritual solid food" category? What things are necessary to nourish mature believers?
- Why is it important for believers to move from "milk" to "solid food"?
- What are some things a believer can do to train in spiritual things?
- How is spiritual training similar to physical training? How is it different?
- What role does physical maturity play in spiritual maturity? Can an old person be an immature believer or can a young person be a mature believer?
- What expectations do you think God has for immature believers?
- How do you think those expectations change as time goes on?
- What would you say God expects from mature believers?
- Where are you at in the discipleship process? What is the next step in discipleship you need to take?