

## #1 Matthew 28:18-20 “What Does Making Disciples Mean and How Do We Do It?”

#2 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "*All* authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and **make disciples** of *all* the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 "**teaching them to observe *all* things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**" Amen.

**“Make disciples...teaching them...”** Young believers need to be taught the basics of the faith as they seek to follow Jesus and be His disciple.

#3 **When Jesus calls people to follow Him; to be His disciples He isn't merely calling them to be His admirers or even converts (spectators). He is calling them to be a people who would seek to learn and obey Him.**

**When a person chooses to accept Jesus calling it has transforming impact in their lives and also on their culture. We are to be His followers enabled and equipped to do the works He planned for us to do – to be salt and light to a dying world – a beacon of hope to those who are lost.**

**Successful discipleship has at least four key ingredients:  
Relationship, Biblical Knowledge, Practice and Time.**

#4 **1. Relationship** – Loving relationships are the only basis for a good teaching & learning environment. To teach someone you must have a relationship with them and to learn you must know that your teacher cares about you. This means meeting on a regular basis, eating together, being in each other's homes, praying together through the struggles of new-found faith. #5 “No one cares what you know, until they know that you care for

**them.”** John Maxwell

**#6 2. Knowledge of Jesus Commands** - There are things that need to be learned. There is an agreed-on body of knowledge which is basic to Christianity consisting of Jesus' teachings and commandments (based on the OT) and an expansion of that teaching by the Apostles in the NT. Jesus has given His pastors the authority to oversee discipleship relationships and what doctrine is taught during the process. **#7 \*Turn Ephesians 4:11** It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> 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 men in their deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup> Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. <sup>16</sup> From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

**#8 3. Practice obeying (response)** - Practice obeying the commands of the Lord from His Word, written on our hearts by His Spirit. **John 14:15** "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

**#9 4. Time** - No one matures overnight. Nobody grows up in one day, physically or spiritually, and no one can bypass the process of time it takes to be a disciple of the Lord. And not just time, but practice over time. **Hebrews 5:14 (NASB)** But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

Practice implies **patience, love and support** on the part of those doing the discipling and **diligence and commitment** on the part

**of the disciple.** Disciples are going to make mistakes and fail at times – it is a part of the process. **#10 Phil. 3:13-15 (NIV)** “...But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. 15 All of us who are mature should take such a view of things.

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We are given a clear example in the NT of what the discipleship process looks like in the lives of three “disciples” ***Barnabas, Paul and Timothy. Take a stroll with me through the Book of Acts:***

**First, Barnabas: #11 Acts 4:36–37 (NIV84)** Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), <sup>37</sup> sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet. Barnabas got his nickname by caring more for the physical welfare of others in the church than he did his own needs and we see this in his relationship with Paul.

In Acts 9 after Saul’s (Paul) conversion, Barnabas immediately saw great potential for the kingdom of God in this young man: **#12 Acts 9:26–27 (NLT)** When Saul arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to meet with the believers, but they were all afraid of him. They did not believe he had truly become a believer! <sup>27</sup> **Then Barnabas brought him to the apostles and told them** how Saul had seen the Lord on the way to Damascus and how the Lord had spoken to Saul. He also told them that Saul had preached boldly in the name of Jesus in Damascus.

He followed through on his care for Paul: **Acts 11:20–26 (NLT)** However, some of the believers who went to Antioch from Cyprus and Cyrene began preaching to the Gentiles about the Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup> The power of the Lord was with them, and a large number of these Gentiles believed and turned to the Lord. <sup>22</sup> When the church at Jerusalem heard what had

happened, **they sent Barnabas to Antioch.** <sup>23</sup> When he arrived and saw this evidence of God’s blessing, he was filled with joy, and he encouraged the believers to stay true to the Lord. **#13** <sup>24</sup> **Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and strong in faith. And many people were brought to the Lord.** <sup>25</sup> **Then Barnabas went on to Tarsus to look for Saul.** <sup>26</sup> **When he found him, he brought him back to Antioch. Both of them stayed there with the church for a full year, teaching large crowds of people. (It was at Antioch that the believers were first called Christians.)**

For a time Barnabas was Saul’s “mentor” in the faith. (“A wise and faithful counselor”) The “*son of encouragement*” determined to help Saul mature in the faith and to begin to use the gifts that the Holy Spirit had given him. *You who are more mature; “Are you willing to be a “wise and faithful” counselor to others like Barnabas was to Paul. Are you willing to give up your personal agenda and your time to raise-up another? Remember, without your commitment to relationship there can be no discipleship.*

Over time Saul became Barnabas’ equal and even greater in ministry. **#14 Acts 13:1–4 (NLT)** Among **the prophets and teachers** of the church at Antioch of Syria were Barnabas...and Saul...<sup>2</sup> One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Dedicate **Barnabas and Saul** (*first mention!*) for the special work to which I have called them.” <sup>3</sup> So after more fasting and prayer, the men laid their hands on them and sent them on their way. <sup>4</sup> So **Barnabas and Saul** were sent out by the Holy Spirit. (**Vs. 9 Name changed “Paul”**)

**#15 Acts 15:1 (NLT)** While **Paul** (*first mention!*) and **Barnabas** were at Antioch of Syria, some men from Judea arrived and began to teach the believers: “Unless you are circumcised as required by the law of Moses, you cannot be saved.” <sup>2</sup> Paul and Barnabas disagreed with them, arguing

vehemently. Finally, the church decided to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem...”

In time Barnabas became Paul’s friend and co-worker to one greater! He “came alongside” him in the faith as his encourager; someone to help him fulfill the ministry God had called him to. They even struggled with differences of opinion: **#16 Acts 15:39 (NASB)** And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. **40 But Paul chose Silas and left**, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. *(This was later all reconciled)*

**#16 – Relationships:** We need someone who will be honest and maybe even disagree with us. God knows we all need friends in the faith who will encourage us and work beside us. ***This of course means that we are willing to be a friend in the faith!*** We must see the value of hanging around with other believers in honest, open, give and take relationships ***without being overly sensitive or clingy, controlling, or manipulating.*** We need to be true friends to each other with ears to listen, words to encourage from the Word as well as, hands and feet to help in the situations of life.

***Do you have a real friend (s) and are you willing to be one?***

This mentoring friendship helped Paul to grow and prepare so that eventually he became the apostle for many believers in the Greek and Roman world. ***As his ministry grew he began to be a mentor and discipler of other people.*** He passed his ministry and faith onto others who would carry on after he was gone.

**#18 Acts 16:1–3 (NLT)** Paul went first to Derbe and then to Lystra, where there was a young disciple named Timothy. His mother was a Jewish believer, but his father was a Greek. <sup>2</sup> Timothy was well thought of by the believers...so Paul wanted him to join them on their journey”

What Barnabas had done for Paul, Paul now does for Timothy. He is going to give of himself so that Timothy can grow in the faith. Timothy has to be willing to be involved in the process and submit himself under Paul's authority (even being circumcised!).

Like Timothy, we all need a more mature believer to “look up to” in the faith. If the Apostle Paul and Timothy needed a more mature believer to encourage them in the faith and show them the ropes; why not you? This is part of God's plan for your life, that a more mature believer becomes your mentor at least for a season, guiding you in the truths of the faith. ***To be a disciple of Jesus Christ you must first of all be a person under Jesus authority and those He has placed in authority!*** #19

**Hebrews 13:17 (NIV84)** Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Ask yourself; ***“Am I willing to be answerable to anyone on how I am living my life?”*** Often I believe that we are maturing very slowly (sometimes it seems not at all) because we are proud and rebellious and afraid to submit to any authority. We stay isolated because we don't want to be accountable to anyone else.

Paul taught Timothy the truths of the Christian faith, Timothy caught a life and ministry style from Paul. #20 **2 Timothy 3:10 (NIV)** You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, 11 persecutions, sufferings...”

**(PS – Your own children and the children of our church need this from you! This is a great place to start and learn how to disciple others! You need to disciple them first and your first responsibility from the Lord!)**

There is also a responsibility that comes with being a mentor because people are watching you and you are a role model. Paul knew he was being a role model for other believers.

**#21** 1 Corin. 11:1 (NIV) Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. **#21a** Heb. 13:7 (NASB) Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. This knowledge caused him to be more careful: **#22** 1 Corinthians 9:26–27 (NLT) So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. <sup>27</sup> I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, **I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.**

The work of passing on your faith to another is one of most joyful and rewarding things for a believer, because it is a fulfillment of the Great Commission. Any time we obey the Lord and work with Him in the lives of others - the result is joy unspeakable! \*\*Not only that but we make a friend for life and create a support network for ourselves in the faith as years go by.

After he had grown for a season, Paul began to put him to work. **#23** Acts 19:22 (NIV84) He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.

**#24** Some of you here today I have personally discipled and now you are my friends and my co-workers in Christ. Now hopefully you are mentoring your “Timothys”. We need each other in order to fulfill the Great Commission. It’s all about relationships, friendships and co-dependence (in a healthy sense). These relationships work together to accomplish the task.

**#25** First, we need to be under the authority of someone who loves us and will guide us as we grow and learn the basics of the faith.

We also need Christian friends with whom we can have an honest relationship; these are our equals in the faith.

And finally we need to be passing our faith onto others, helping new believers - those younger in the faith to grow and mature and training them to train others etc. We all need a “Paul” that will mentor us, a “Barnabas” who will be our honest friend in the faith, and a “Timothy” that we are pouring our lives in to.

I am not ignorant of the fact that it appears that we are all busy, raising kids, making a living, trying to eke out a few minutes for ourselves and we just don’t have the time it takes for another relationship.

But what I found was a good exercise for me to discover what I was really doing with my time was to keep a diary of my time for a week. Every detail – sleeping, eating, work, rest, TV etc. and then take a hard look at it and see if this really isn’t an issue of priorities – not an issue of time?

**#26** When Jesus called some of his first disciples to follow him the call didn’t come at a necessarily convenient time. It came in the midst of their working in the trade that supplied needs for their families. It came in the midst of their established lives with all that that entailed – family, friends, routine, etc. The call to be His disciples was to take precedence over everything else.

So again – this is a matter of personal choice and commitment; a radical change of lifestyle because you want to be a disciple and help others to grow in their faith. Furthering God’s kingdom becomes the center of your life.



Ask yourself: “Am I willing to give my time and energy to have these relationships in my life?” If so, set your heart to get out of your normal routine and comfort zone and seek out these relationships as the Lord leads. A home fellowships is a great place to start!

We can help direct you, you will ask! Pastor Kevin (men), Susan Swafford and Terri Wade (ladies) can help you discover who these people might be in your life! We have a good variety of discipleship materials available for you even free and some low cost. Just check in the bookstore or with Pastor Kevin.

**That brings us to the end of our study of Matthew’s Gospel. It is fitting that Matthew looking out the world set before the disciples put these words of the Risen Savior as the last words of his Gospel and they still apply to us today as Jesus followers: #27**

**Matthew 28:19-20 – “GO Therefore”**